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Key Signature Pedagogy

an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland – ‘fascinating laboratory’ or ‘deviant tradition’?

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**Key Signature Pedagogy: an exploration of
instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland –
‘fascinating laboratory’ or ‘deviant tradition’?**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor in Education (Ed.D.)

School of Social Science and Public Policy
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ABBREVIATIONS

ABRSM	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
BERA	British Education Research Association
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETB	Education and Training Boards
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
IFS	Institution Focused Study
LSMD	The Leinster School of Music & Drama
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum Assessment
MEND	Music Education National Debate
ORF	Official Recontextualising Field
PRF	Pedagogical Recontextualising Field
RIAM	The Royal Irish Academy of Music
RBT	Research Based Thesis
SMEI	Society for Music Education in Ireland
VEC	Vocational Education Committees

PRELUDE

When I first came across the term ‘signature pedagogy’ (Shulman, 2005, p.52), it struck me that few pedagogies have as distinctive, even idiosyncratic, a signature as that of instrumental music. With its established routines and traditions, in particular the one-to-one, master-apprentice dyad, the instrumental lesson has a very particular signature.

In music parlance, a ‘key signature’ provides essential information about a piece of music. It indicates the tonal centre which grounds the piece – the point of departure and the point of return. All modulations and musical episodes are experienced in relation to that tonal centre, but inevitably the music is drawn back to an ultimate resolution in the home key.

Like the key signature of a piece of music, the signature pedagogy of instrumental music underpins and colours the experience of all the actors involved in learning to play a musical instrument. This signature pedagogy is *key* to understanding the processes and practices which prevail in this very particular educational context. I have therefore, adopted and adapted Shulman’s concept and will refer to the pedagogy of instrumental music as ‘Key Signature Pedagogy’. This concept will provide a point of departure for the exploration of practices in instrumental education and will underpin the research questions and methodology, with a view to arriving at some worthwhile conclusions.

Kennell (2002) first juxtaposed the contrasting positions of Bloom and Schön in respect of the one-to-one context within instrumental music education. Bloom (1985) considered this setting to be a ‘fascinating laboratory’ for the study of teaching and learning, with its own ‘language, symbol systems, tools and facets of human psychology’ (Kennell, 2002, p.243). On the other hand, Schön (1990) called it a ‘deviant tradition of education’ situated in studios and conservatoires where students are initiated into ‘ “traditions of the calling” ... by “the right kind of telling” ’ (Schön, 1990, p.16). Such a divergence of opinions provides a broad and intriguing palette for the researcher, and I decided to reflect this contradiction in the title of my thesis. Whatever the outcomes of this research, exploring the signature pedagogy of instrumental music in Ireland has been fascinating for me as a researcher, and I hope will prove interesting for the reader.

ABSTRACT

This study examines pedagogy and assessment in instrumental¹ education² in Ireland. It arises from a concern that instrumental teaching and learning have remained situated in a ‘black box’, operating outside of mainstream education, and have not benefitted from the research and theory which have influenced other areas of education³.

Using Shulman’s (2005) framework of ‘signature pedagogy’, the data enable a rich description of instrumental pedagogy in practice. The study explores how this pedagogy is shaped by assessment processes, and questions if current pedagogical practices meet the needs, aspirations and expectations of students, teachers, parents and examiners. The influence of institutions, such as examination boards and conservatoires, on practice is considered. It is argued that Key Signature Pedagogy is congruent with Bernstein’s ‘performance’ pedagogical model (1996) and is determined by institutions which have historically regulated instrumental education for *professional* purposes.

A pragmatic research methodology is employed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data are obtained by questionnaires completed by parents, semi-structured interviews with teachers and examiners, and a focus group with students.

The data suggest that certain unchanged cultural rituals characterise instrumental education in Ireland. Teachers’ pedagogical practices are influenced by their experiences as students, and the nature of their professional preparation may account for varying levels of agency, adaptability and openness to new ideas in teaching. Parents enrol their children for altruistic reasons, emphasising enjoyment, social interaction, personal and academic development. However, a high stakes examination system impacts on *what* is taught in lessons and *how* it is taught, resulting in a culture of performativity. Many factors impact on students’ engagement in instrumental lessons, but the prevailing rituals of Key Signature Pedagogy frequently do not sustain students’ musical or wider interests.

The study concludes with a proposal for a new framework for instrumental teaching, learning and assessment, based on Bernstein’s ‘competence’ model (1996).

¹ ‘Instrumental’ implies both instrumental and vocal music throughout the study.

² ‘Instrumental education’ represents the extracurricular provision of instrumental tuition at studio settings, music schools and conservatoires, as distinguished from ‘classroom music’ in mainstream education.

³ This study focuses on a formal tradition of instrumental music education in Ireland, the culture of which has evolved from a Western art tradition, and has historically involved the extra-curricular teaching and learning of instrumental music in music schools and studios. (See also Section 1.3).

You've listened long enough. Now strike your note...

When they make the circle wide, it's time to swim

out on your own and fill the element

with signatures on your own frequency

echo soundings, searches, probes, allurements,

elver-gleams in the dark of the whole sea.

From 'Station Island' by Seamus Heaney (1984)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, Context, Key Issues and Overview

*The month of May was also marked out by something else: the approach of the annual piano examination. Once it was me hammering away on those major and minor scales, those arpeggios and contrary motions, occasionally giving the piano base a vital kick of frustration. Just under four decades ago, yes it was me, panicking at the last minute, feeling my hands collapse from a mixture of under-practice, and final, last-minute over-practice, as I tried to play the third, upbeat movement of Mozart's Sonata in C Major. The exasperated nun, at her wits' end, was literally crying. She had thrown me out of the room – telling me not to come back until I could play the piece – and I did. I got through, was not allowed to give up music and went on to the next grade ... Now it's my daughter's turn. As I write these words, she's downstairs working her way through one of the minor scales. It's the week before the music exam and her teacher has got her to increase the tempo of a piece called 'The Clown' ... I don't know yet how she feels about her music. What I do know is that Britney Spears is every bit as important as The Valkyries or Romeo and Juliet. (From *The Piano Lesson* by Mary O'Donnell, 2006, p.11).*

1.1 Introduction

I begin with this excerpt as it highlights many of the issues that are raised in this thesis, and will resound with those who have taken instrumental lessons and graded

examinations. The writer is recollecting her own experience as a young piano student, with the backdrop of the inescapable graded music examinations. Her description highlights the high stakes examination, the fragmented preparation of musical elements, the worry and frustration of the teacher, the waning interest of the student, the sporadic practice, and an implicit cultural detachment from the repertoire being played. The author implies that she wanted to discontinue with instrumental lessons, but having passed the examination, was not allowed to do so. The excerpt also suggests that the experience has not changed much in the intervening four decades.

1.2 Genesis of the study

As a music teacher, I had the insider knowledge to navigate my own children through their instrumental education, and was able to seek out alternative routes when they hit stumbling blocks. I am acutely aware however, from discussions with other parents, that this is not the experience of many families. Years of experience in the field, and anecdotal evidence, lead me to question if the practice of instrumental education in Ireland remains firmly rooted in ‘unchanged cultural rituals’ (Rathgen, 2006, p.580). Unlike in the UK where considerable research has taken place into instrumental education, this field has remained under-researched in Ireland. This study is an attempt to address this gap by looking at pedagogy and assessment in instrumental education in Ireland.

1.2.1 Triggers for this study

Since the middle 19th century, certain professional institutions such as conservatoires and examination boards have served as the harbingers of music education in the UK and Ireland and across other Commonwealth countries (Boyton, 2006). These institutions have served the profession well, providing training and qualifications for instrumental teachers, and accreditation for their students. They provided accountability and set

standards for teaching and learning instrumental music. They organised continuous professional development for teachers in what was often a solitary profession. They provided curricula and syllabi for teaching and learning in an incremental way, as outlined on the ABRSM (2013) website:

[The ABRSM has] designed exams and assessments to motivate students of all levels and ages, giving them a series of realistic goals and tangible rewards for their achievements (ABRSM, 2013).

The examination boards continue to set standards for the profession, and in particular provide a means of benchmarking across the profession which supports student access and mobility to advanced programmes of study or performance.

As a classroom and instrumental teacher however, and more recently as a music teacher educator, I came to this study with a concern that instrumental education had become somewhat disconnected from students' lived experience of music in Ireland. Instrumental lessons were in danger of, not only becoming *élitist* in financial terms, but also appealing culturally to a diminishing audience. I had a concern that the rituals associated with instrumental education were dated and unchanging, having been institutionalised for over a century.

Instrumental education in Ireland has benefitted little from the climate of change that is evident in classroom music. This teaching was transformed in 1999 by the introduction of a radical and, at times, controversial change of curriculum for Leaving Certificate⁴ (LC) Music (Boydell, 2001). The new LC Music curriculum broke away from an approach that was closely aligned to Western art traditions, to include a broader and more expansive curriculum involving jazz, popular, and traditional Irish music. There is very little evidence that this culture of change has filtered through to instrumental education, and possible explanations for this will be explored in this study.

⁴ The Leaving Certificate is the final examination in the Irish Secondary School System.

Rostvall (2003) claims that ‘instrumental tuition has become a hidden and almost secret activity that goes on privately behind closed doors’ (p.214). Because of the lack of research into instrumental education in Ireland, my first objective was to shed some light on current pedagogy and practice – the ‘signature pedagogy’ (Shulman, 2005, p.52) of instrumental music rather than rely on anecdotal evidence. Secondly, given that the graded examination system plays an integral part in the processes of formal instrumental education (Salaman, 1994; O’Sullivan, 2010), and because of the interplay between assessment and pedagogy, I wanted to explore the role of assessment, how it impacts on practices, and how it is perceived by stakeholders. Thirdly, I wished to investigate how this signature pedagogy coincided (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the primary actors in the process; namely students, teachers, parents and examiners.

1.2.2 Researcher biography

Teachers bring their own ‘educational biographies’ to their practice (Rathgen, 2006, p.180) and the same can be said for research. My own educational biography has influenced decisions and actions throughout my career, and I bring this cumulative experience to this research. In chapter 4, I will discuss the implications for insider research, but here I will present my own biography which has led me towards this research.

For most children, early music experiences are informal and come from within their home or community environments. My earliest formative musical experiences include hearing and singing traditional Irish music and songs at my grandmothers’ home in West Cork. On the other hand, my recollections of early piano lessons (which my parents initiated considering music education to be important) are of incongruity and disinterest. These lessons primarily involved playing pieces that held little interest

for me and preparing for graded examinations. My passion for playing was restored at secondary school, where music was embedded in the community of everyday life, for leisure, for celebrations, for religious worship, for study, for relaxation, for school plays and miscellaneous formal and informal performances.

This was followed by a hugely positive university experience which balanced academic and performance work. My first professional role, however, was as an instrumental teacher and lecturer at a state music school. Here the conservatoire ethos and high stakes environment did not always fit with my own views on education which continued to be shaped while undertaking a Masters Degree in Education. Consequently, although this early professional experience had a positive impact on my development as a musician, I decided to change directions to work in different educational environments. My concern, as a music educator, has always been for the general music student who is navigating what Swanwick (2013) calls the ‘muddle’ of music education. It is this student, who may never (or indeed may) become a professional musician, but for whom music is life-enriching, that is the focus of my interest in this research.

1.3 The Context for Instrumental Education in Ireland

The present study investigates pedagogical practices in a specific cultural tradition of instrumental music education in Ireland. The focus of this study is formal instrumental education, the culture of which has evolved from a Western art tradition, and has historically involved the extra-curricular teaching and learning of instrumental music in music schools and studios. It does not therefore, include the formal and informal learning settings of the relative ‘newcomers’ to music education: i.e. jazz, popular and traditional musics.

Although set within an Irish context which values traditional music, this esteem for traditional Irish music was not always reflected in the music education system. While the promotion of Irish language and culture was very strong during the 20th Century, this focus did not always permeate the primary institutions of music education. Ó hAllmhuráin (2003) states that during the 1940s and 1950s traditional Irish music was ‘shunned by the educational establishment’ (p.144) and to learn music formally was to embrace a Western art tradition. Right up to the 1990s, because of the peripheral position of traditional Irish music within the education system, few students elected to take Irish Music as an option for their Leaving Certificate (Downey, 2009). The increased commercialism and popularity of traditional Irish music in the 21st century has, however, led to increased engagement by young people with Irish music (*ibid.*).

The move towards mainstreaming genres – other than Western art music – within music education in Ireland is a relatively recent process. It has been mentioned that the 1999 Leaving Certificate music curriculum marked a move towards the inclusion of other genres within classroom music education. Music degree programmes at third level have included modules in Irish music for several decades, however the approach has been from an ethnomusicological perspective rather than performance based.

Other genres have not fared much better at third level in Ireland, with most degree programmes focusing on Western art music. There is one jazz music degree programme in the country. Ireland’s first degree in popular music was introduced in Ireland in 2012 at Cork Institute of Technology, with a degree in Commercial Modern Music being offered at Dublin Institution of Technology since 2011. There is currently no university in Ireland offering a degree programme in popular music (Graham, 2012). Given the centrality of Western art music within the music education system in Ireland,

this study will explore whether the systematised processes which have evolved in instrumental education actually mitigate against a natural progression towards integrating different musical genres within the formal instrumental education system. It will also question the suitability of certain established practices for the ‘newcomers’ and consider how the ‘newcomers’ could inform established practice.

In my Institutional Focused Study (IFS) (O’Sullivan, 2010), the historical impact on culture and practices in instrumental education was examined in some detail. It was found that there were strong influences from a parallel tradition in the UK. The Music Education National Debate (MEND) Report, published in Ireland in 2001, acknowledges this cultural influence stating that

Ireland was ready [through the MEND process] for the novelty of personal inputs and further fertilization from the English-speaking world but from a pool not just defined by her British neighbours, whose thinking, with which we were familiar, had dominated Irish music education from its inception in the nineteenth century and through both the colonial and post-colonial eras (Heneghan, 2001, p.89).

The British influence can be found in many Irish institutions, not least through the graded examination system. Macintyre (2007) states that while the ‘leading musical nations’ (p.76) of Germany, France and Italy did not have the need for such systems ‘the British Empire’s passion for validated personal achievement underpinned its own music examination system’ (*ibid.*). This system was most prevalent in former British colonies (Boyton, 2006) and extended to Ireland during the 19th Century.

1.3.1 Instrumental provision

In relation to the provision of instrumental tuition, a European Music Schools’ Union (EMU) report indicated that, in Ireland, pupils (or their parents) provided 85% of the cost of provision, with only 14% being provided by the State or municipality, and 1% came through sponsorship or other means (EMU, 2006). Other reports indicated that State supported instrumental programmes in schools were rare, and instrumental

education usually took place outside of school; consequently only children whose parents could afford to pay could even consider participating (Herron, 1985; Heneghan, 2001; Music Network, 2003). The few State music schemes which did exist provided instrumental teaching for primary and second level students, part-funded at local level by the Vocational Education Committees⁵ (VECs). These schemes were entirely dependent on political will at local level and their distribution was arbitrary. Not surprisingly, many studies have lamented the lack of a coherent policy for the provision of instrumental education throughout the country (Herron, 1985; Heneghan, 2001; Beausang, 2002; Music Network, 2003).

Beyond the few State-funded organisations, which are largely urban based, instrumental tuition relies almost entirely on the private sector, often with sole practitioners operating from their own homes. The past 25 years, however, have seen growth in the number of private music schools throughout the country, due to the entrepreneurial initiative of qualified teachers returning to live in their own areas (Beausang, 2002). Instrumental tuition remains primarily a one-to-one experience, although the pooling of resources in these new schools has led to an increase in the number of youth orchestras and ensembles, and increased provision of aural training and musicianship classes (IAYO, 2013). In a report on music schools in Ireland, Beausang (2002) provided the following account which, although marking an improvement in the situation, still points to rather precarious provision:

In Ireland today there has been a vast increase in the number of music schools – sixty-five at last count. Many of these schools have been developed by VEC Education Officers and County Council Arts Officers or by private individuals to fill an educational void in a region; all rely on a pool of part-time teachers who travel from school to school, wherever work is available. The nature of provision varies in quality and consistency and is not subject to quality control, but there

⁵ The Vocational Education Committees (VECs) are statutory local education bodies in the Republic of Ireland that administer some secondary education, further education (post-secondary), adult education, and some music schemes. From August 2013, these bodies are to be called Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

are shining examples in many parts of the country which point to outstanding achievement by dedicated individuals and the local community (Beausang, 2002, p.2).

Although instrumental education in Ireland is not officially regulated, established Irish and British conservatoires and examination boards, such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), have tended to set the standards and policy for the whole country. The RIAM is the largest examining board in Ireland, with over 42,000 students each year taking graded examinations through their Local Examinations Centres (RIAM, 2013). Comparisons between the different syllabi of the examining boards indicate very little substantive difference in structure and content (Salaman, 1994; O’Sullivan, 2010).

O’Neill (1996) stated that in the UK instrumental education followed a ‘classical conservatoire’ tradition (p.5). This was centred on a Western art music tradition, and aimed at achieving technical excellence and faithful reproduction of printed scores of a central repertoire, rather than on aspects such as improvisation or composition. This approach also prevails in Ireland. Despite the existence of a rich indigenous musical culture, there is little evidence that Irish traditional music was embraced within the established music education institutions (Heneghan, 2001; Ó hAllmhuráin, 2003; Downey, 2009). The MEND report states that

Music educators ... tend to be supportive of the tenets of Western art music, simply because these have been the enablers of their own education (Heneghan, 2001, p.1).

Because the MEND report is one of the most extensive expositions on music education in Ireland, providing a particular snapshot of music education in the country at the turn of the millennium, it is discussed here to provide some context for my study.

1.3.2 The Music Education National Debate

The Music Education National Debate (MEND) was convened between 1994 and 1996, and the final report published in 2001. The initiative was set up in response to an Arts Council report entitled *Deaf Ears?* (Herron, 1985), which found that ‘the young Irish person has the worst of all European musical “worlds” ’ (Herron, 1985, section 4.4.9). MEND aimed to raise political and public consciousness of the importance of a consistent, state-supported system of instrumental education for all.

MEND included representation from ‘every music education constituency in the State’ (Heneghan, 2001, p.2), and included international scholars from the UK, the USA and Australia. This extensive representation facilitated a focus on national and global issues in music education. MEND deliberated on classroom music and instrumental provision in Ireland, from primary education through to third level. These included such issues as: the philosophical foundations for music education; multiculturalism within music education with a specific focus on biculturalism (i.e. mainstreaming traditional Irish music); and the ‘high’ versus ‘mass’ culture debate within music education. Some of the principal findings of MEND in relation to instrumental education were:

1. Education provision for performance had been ‘culpably neglected’ with the rural community having to rely on the efforts of private enterprise, creating ‘a further dichotomy, *inter alia*, along socio-economic grounds, gratuitously dubbing the subject *élitist*’ (Heneghan, 2001, p.23).
2. Music education is examination-driven, and valued more for its potential in supporting university entry than for the intrinsic worth of the subject itself.
3. Performance does not play a significant role in general classroom music in Ireland.
4. Ireland, like other countries, is struggling with debates relating to ‘high’ versus ‘mass’ culture in music education; and with diversity and multiculturalism. In

the Irish context, the issue of biculturalism⁶ in respect of the place of Irish traditional music in education is a particular issue.

In the MEND report, instrumental education received some consideration, but this lacked the depth afforded classroom music. In relation to instrumental music, the focus was on practical issues such as provision, rather than on philosophical debate relating to the nature, function, or purpose of instrumental education. The paucity of research in instrumental education seems to evidence ‘the negative burden ... of the practico-academic divide’ (Heneghan, 2001, p.32), indicating a greater concern with classroom music provision. The report acknowledged that

there is a damaging dichotomy between academic and practical streams of music education in Ireland. This appears as mutual lack of understanding and intolerance between professional groups but also impinges on the learners, especially when questions of curricular balance, relevance and prioritisations of available time are concerned (p.202).

The practico-academic divide in music education in Ireland is an underlying theme in this thesis. Possible theoretical explanations for its existence, and ensuing ramifications for the practice of instrumental education, are explored in Chapter 3.

The MEND report recognised the importance of instrumental education, stating:

If there is one significant piece in the jigsaw of Irish music education that is still missing, it is the provision of specialist vocal/instrumental training that is generally available (on a countrywide basis) accessible and affordable (Heneghan, 2001, p.202).

The private music school movement was not viewed as the solution to the access issue, but instead the provision of State subsidies was recommended (Heneghan, 2001). The MEND report does, however, appear to have had some impact as evidenced by the establishment of the Music Generation Programme.

⁶ This debate hinges around the fact that the Irish language enjoys a particular place in the Irish primary and secondary school curricula, in that it is compulsory for all students. Traditional Irish music did not enjoy the same privilege and indeed was marginalised within formal music education system.

1.3.3 The Music Generation Programme

Some changes in the delivery of instrumental education are becoming evident, with the implementation of the Music Generation programme (MG). This programme (begun in 2010) represents a shift in thinking with regard to instrumental provision. MG has overseen the implementation of new musical, vocal and instrumental initiatives, in different genres, for different age groups, in geographically or socially disadvantaged regions throughout Ireland. Initiatives vary considerably in terms of their nature and scope, with consequent implications for pedagogical approaches. Funding and access issues have brought to the fore debates on the merits of one-to-one versus group tuition, the high versus popular culture, as well as student engagement and attrition (Thompson, 2009). My research is therefore timely in that it can contribute to the debates on key issues in instrumental provision, in a changing music education environment.

1.4 Key Issues

The following paragraphs outline the key issues or themes that frame the theoretical considerations and the research questions for this study.

1.4.1 Signature Pedagogy

A primary theme of this thesis is the signature pedagogy of instrumental music.

Shulman (2005) defines signature pedagogies as

types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions ... [that] can reveal a lot about the personalities, dispositions and cultures of their fields (p.52).

He considers that professional education is not education for understanding alone, but is focused on the preparation of an individual for practice in a professional field. It must therefore measure up, not only to the standards of an academy or school, but to those of the particular profession. It will be argued that the model of tuition followed for instrumental music is a professional one and consequently does not suit those learners

who do not have professional ambitions. The general instrumental student's interests are not served by a system which has as its model, the paradigm of the concert musician.

1.4.2 The academic-professional divide – institutional factors

Classroom and instrumental teaching have occupied different parallel educational domains (Kennell, 2002). I will argue that each has developed its own distinctive philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment strategies along the lines of Bernstein's (1996) 'competence' and 'performance' models respectively. These models are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, but briefly correspond to a learner-centred, inductive, integrated approach ('competence' model) for classroom music, as opposed to a discipline centred, deductive, prescriptive approach ('performance' model) for instrumental education. The 'performance' model of instrumental education has been framed by professional institutions, whose interests have dominated practice.

1.4.3 Assessment

The interconnectivity of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in all fields of education is widely recognised (Bernstein, 1996; Black & Wiliam, 1998). Evidence from the UK and Ireland indicates that assessment in instrumental education is primarily carried out through graded examinations which are ubiquitous in the field (Salaman, 1994; O'Neill, 1998; O'Sullivan, 2010; Fautley, 2010). The results of my IFS indicated that a majority of the instrumental students in that study did graded examinations (O'Sullivan, 2010). There is evidence that participating in the graded examinations increases practice and provides motivation (Davidson & Scutt, 1999; Hallam, 2006), and that students consider the examinations important for learning (O'Sullivan, 2010). Not all studies relate positive findings however. Salaman (1994) posits that the graded examinations promote a 'disjointed' approach to teaching music, focusing on an 'amalgam of skills' rather than a holistic approach to learning music (p.215). Others view the graded

examination system as a source of control (Broadfoot, 1996; O'Neill, 1996). Because of the significant role that the graded examinations play in teaching and learning instrumental music, the impact of this assessment model on pedagogical practices is a key issue in this study.

1.4.4 The student, teacher and parent partnership in instrumental education

Because instrumental education is an extracurricular, elective activity, and many children begin at an early age, parents play an important role in initiating lessons, and supporting their children financially, practically and by providing motivation and support (Creech, 2006). In Ireland parental financial support is essential because of the lack of State funding for instrumental tuition. Studies report that the highest achievers are those whose parents are more involved in their children's lessons (Bloom, 1985; O'Neill, 1996; Creech, 2006). O'Neill states that learning to play a musical instrument

is a process in which child, parent and teacher must work together towards, and agree on, the same basic goals and share the same commitment to progress (1996, p.245).

She also found that it is not important who initiates the instrumental lessons, as long as the child is in agreement.

Examining the interrelationships between teachers, parents and pupils, Creech (2006) reports that parent participation ranges from 'fairly distant facilitators' to 'active participants who attended lessons [and] supervised practising' (p.181). O'Neill (1996) indicates that parents' motivations for enrolling their children are generally altruistic, i.e. to provide opportunities for the development of their potential for performing, and personal satisfaction through involvement in worthwhile musical activities. My study will explore if the current practices in instrumental education meet the aspirations and objectives of parents.

1.4.5 Teacher role and teacher agency

Teachers' practices and beliefs have an enormous impact on the process of teaching and learning. Rostvall (2003) states that

instrumental teachers and their students are following routines that have evolved during the long history of instrumental teaching ... No teacher or student could participate in the classroom activities without being influenced by the tradition (p.214).

Teachers' personalities and teaching styles impact on student engagement (Hallam, 2006; Creech, 2006). Teachers have responsibility for selecting repertoire and for providing performance opportunities. In relation to instrumental examinations, parents and students are frequently willing to go along with the teachers' advice on taking, preparing and practising strategies for the examinations (Davidson & Scutt, 1999). My study will examine the teachers' role in determining cultural practices, how teachers are influenced by institutional imperatives and constraints and teacher agency in terms of their capacity to affect change.

1.4.6 The student as agent

Students also have a say in engaging, and continuing with, instrumental lessons. O'Neill (1996) was surprised to find that many children who were offered the opportunity to play a musical instrument chose not to, or discontinued after a brief period. Driscoll (2009) found that the critical drop-out age from instrumental tuition coincided with students becoming more independent in their taste in music and at a time when popular culture increasingly became part of their lives. Recognising the agency that students have, Boyton (2006) stated that

youths tend to form their own particularized responses and behaviours to ideas received, thus proving to be active, unpredictable agents during and after the time they spend within the parameters of institutional control (p. xiii).

My IFS focused on students' views on the graded examination system (O'Sullivan-Taaffe, 2011; see Appendix 14 for a conference paper outlining this research). In this

follow-on research, I am interested in gaining a greater understanding of the factors which motivated students to persist in learning to play a musical instrument. The research will, therefore, conclude by returning to students' views to explore if current practices in instrumental education support their objectives.

1.4.7 The multicultural/bicultural debate: 'high' versus 'mass' culture

Green (2003) found that the prevailing ideologies in music education during the 20th Century favoured classical music⁷. She states that

through the twentieth century and stretching before and beyond, people have argued, or have assumed, that Western classical music, very broadly defined, is the only really valuable style of music (p.2).

She found that the majority of children from middle and working classes favour popular music, and that

the ideology of classical music's superior value corresponds with the values of a minority of middle-class children, whereas it deviates from the musical tastes of some middle-class and many working-class children (*ibid.*).

Downey (2009) has argued against making assumptions about young people's musical tastes. She highlights the importance of taking into account the localised interests of students (for example Irish traditional music), and their cultural interests and origins. Consequently, the debate relating to students' musical interests does not only apply to classical versus popular music, but relates to all non-classical genres which are not widely represented in instrumental education.

The 'bicultural issue' raised in the MEND report refers specifically to the place of traditional Irish music in music education in Ireland. My IFS found that very little traditional Irish music was included in the reported repertoire played by the participants, and none at all in the examination repertoire (O'Sullivan, 2010). This present study will

⁷ 'Western art music' and 'classical music' will be used interchangeably to refer to European classical music traditions, although these are no longer exclusively confined to Europe.

examine how prevailing ideologies in music education are institutionalised in practice, and explore whether these cultural rituals continue to meet students' needs.

1.5 The Research Questions

The primary research questions were triggered from findings in the IFS, which highlighted a need to establish a base line of what instrumental pedagogy in Ireland looks like in practice; and from a review of the literature relating to assessment and pedagogy in instrumental music. The research questions for my study were therefore identified as follows:

1. What is the signature pedagogy for instrumental education in Ireland, and what does it look like in practice?
2. What is the role of assessment in shaping this pedagogy, and how is the graded examination system perceived by the various stakeholders?
3. How does this signature pedagogy coincide (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the different social actors (students, teachers, parents and examiners) engaged in this process?

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

This chapter outlined the key issues of my study. These will be further developed in Chapter 2 which involves a critical overview of the literature relating to these themes.

The theoretical framework which underpins the study is detailed in Chapter 3. This focuses on Bernstein's (1996) theory on recontextualising fields, and on his 'competence' and 'performance' constructs of education (p.44). Aspects of Bernstein's 'performance' model will be utilised as the basis for examining the data in later chapters. The methodology for the research is detailed in Chapter 4, which outlines the research plan, the rationale for the methodology, the mixed methods employed and the analysis procedures utilised.

Chapter 5 addresses the first research question (RQ1), and explores the signature pedagogy of instrumental education in Ireland, based on the findings of the qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with teachers and examiners. Similarities and variances in practices are examined, and key overarching structures and practices are identified indicating a well-established signature pedagogy (Key Signature Pedagogy) for instrumental education.

The second research question (RQ2) is examined in Chapter 6, and addresses issues relating to assessment and how it has shaped Key Signature Pedagogy. Qualitative data from teachers and examiners are analysed. Table 6.1 represents a culmination of the central findings of Chapters 5 and 6, with an overview of Key Signature Pedagogy and assessment being presented, and integrating aspects of Shulman (2005) and Bernstein's (1996) theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 7 deals with the third research question (RQ3), and examines how Key Signature Pedagogy and assessment practices coincide, or not, with the aspirations and objectives of the various actors involved in instrumental education. Based on data provided from questionnaires, the views of parents are explored. Vignettes from the student focus group provide a rich account of students' experiences, and give a more concrete voice to many of the issues discussed in preceding chapters.

Chapter 8 pulls together the various themes and presents a discussion of the issues that have emerged from the data, and returns to the debate on whether Key Signature Pedagogy constitutes a fascinating laboratory or deviant tradition. The concept of hegemony in instrumental education, issues relating to cultural rituals and institutional practices, teacher agency, and performativity are discussed. Implications for student learning and teacher preparation are presented. The limitations of my study and the possibilities for future research are outlined.

CHAPTER 2

Contextualising the Signature Pedagogy of Instrumental Music

Literature Review

Strangely, given my own commitment to and immersion in creative experiment in schools, when a local piano teacher first asked if I would teach her 9 year old daughter violin privately in the evenings, it never occurred to me to structure her lessons other than in much the same way I recalled being taught violin.

(Mills, 2007, p.140)

2.1 Introduction

In this quote Mills refers to two different contexts in which she practised as a music teacher; the first was the general music classroom in schools, and the other, the one-to-one instrumental lesson. She implies that, in her classroom teaching she employed innovative and creative strategies, but in the instrumental lesson she reverted to ‘unchanged cultural rituals’ (Rathgen, 2006, p.280). This suggests that the teaching strategies that she employed were not just a product of her own teaching skills and style, but were influenced by other underlying social or contextual constructs in the environments where the teaching was being carried out.

In a study of the role of institutions in supporting music learning, Welsh & Ockelford (2009) concluded that ‘learning and teaching in music are shaped by processes outside the individual’ (p.318). The induction of an individual into a

particular musical culture is mediated by dominant models within that culture, which involve particular understandings of practice and performance.

There are many different contexts in which music learning can take place, not all of which are formal educational settings. Welch & Ockelford (2009) provide examples of informal learning where indigenous music is incorporated into people's everyday lives, for example through work-songs, such as rowing songs on the Isle of Mull.

Downey (2009) outlines the different contexts in which traditional Irish music is learnt:

[Formal] learning tends to take place during the master-apprentice solo or group music lesson and master classes. Informal learning is constant for the traditional musician and takes place at sessions, at music lessons, and while listening to recordings and traditional musicians performing in a variety of platforms (p.50).

Green (2002 and 2008) studied how informal learning takes place amongst popular musicians with peer to peer learning, learning by ear, and experimentation being key factors. In each of these contexts different rules of engagement apply, and these rules are maintained by various cultural and educational institutions, which operate within the different social contexts of music learning (Welch & Ockelford, 2009).

While instrumental learning is experienced in the different settings mentioned above, my study is concerned with a particular culturally situated learning context – the formal instrumental lesson. Such lessons are usually extra-curricular, and carried out in 'studio' settings (with a private teacher) or in specialised music schools or conservatoires. Certain general understandings of practice are associated with this model of tuition, *inter alia*, lessons are one-to-one; the canon is based on Western art music with learning focused on the skills required to perform this music; solo performance skills are developed through examinations, concerts and competitions.

The key issues have already been outlined in Chapter 1, and this chapter will outline the literature relating to these themes. This chapter will open with a discussion of Shulman's construct of signature pedagogy, which will be used as a framework for

presenting the emergent concept of Key Signature Pedagogy in later chapters. This will be followed by an outline of the historical and institutional impact of the professional bodies on teaching and learning in instrumental music. An examination of how assessment, in particular the graded examination system, has impacted on instrumental teaching and learning will follow. The literature in relation to student engagement, and attrition in instrumental learning, will be reviewed. Issues relating to motivation, parental involvement, and relationships between students, teachers and parents, will be explored in the light of how they impact on engagement and attrition in instrumental education.

2.2 Shulman's Signature Pedagogy

The original concept of signature pedagogy, as conceived by Shulman, relates to professional preparation in areas such as medicine and law (Shulman, 2005). It therefore usually focuses on the education of adults for professions. Bloom (1985) argues however, that few professions begin professionalising its members as early as instrumental musicians. The myth persists that you must start learning to play a musical instrument at a young age to be successful (Mills, 2007). Schön (1987) claims that musical talent evokes a 'powerful sense of mystery and magic ... the mystery of talent that falls capriciously, like divine grace' (p.17). This mysterious evocation is propped up by 'child prodigies whose occasional appearance gives evidence of its continual renewal' (*ibid.*). The young instrumental student is, therefore, often faced with or set against impossibly high standards. In this way, it is implicit that a child is on a path to becoming a professional from the earliest stages of learning an instrument.

Three dimensions or structures of a signature pedagogy are identified by Shulman (2005); a *surface structure*, a *deep structure*, and an *implicit structure*. A signature pedagogy is defined by what it does, and by what it does *not* do. It is selective

in the approaches it highlights, supporting certain outcomes, while intentionally or unintentionally not addressing others. Such selection can result, over time, in certain aspects of a discipline or profession being perceived as less important.

The *surface structure* deals with the ‘concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning’ (Shulman, p.54), exemplified by bedside teaching or clinical rounds in the medical profession. The *deep structure* is referred to as ‘a set of assumptions about how best to impart ... knowledge and know-how’ (p.55); this aspect of pedagogy goes deeper than knowledge and skills, developing the processes of thinking and acting inherent to the profession. An example is the facilitation of arguments and debates at law lectures to prepare the prospective lawyer for ‘the competitive and confrontational character of case law’ (p.55). Finally Shulman’s *implicit structure* concerns the ‘moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions’ (p.55). These refer to the value systems that underlie a profession, which Shulman refers to as the ‘hidden curriculum’ (p.55).

In what follows, I will suggest parallel examples for these three structures within formal instrumental education. I will propose that these structures in instrumental pedagogy appear to support the objective of developing the *professional* solo performer, rather than promoting a learner-centred approach to playing a musical instrument.

The *surface structure* of instrumental education i.e. the concrete, operational acts of teaching, is evident in the pervasive one-to-one model of instrumental teaching, and the ‘master-apprentice’ pedagogical approach. This approach facilitates the incremental development of technical, sight-reading and interpretation skills, and familiarity with a prescribed core repertoire, which are required for advanced musical performance in classical music.

The *deep structure* in instrumental education could be characterised by recitals, competitions and performances, in preparation for the competitive world of the classical music professional. Through engagement in this competitive world, students develop, not only performance skills, but particular personal characteristics – the ‘extra-musical skills required to succeed’ as a performer (Lehmann *et al.*, 2007, p.166). These skills involve developing a stage presence, dealing with stress, and developing the leadership, intrapersonal, interpersonal and social skills required for working as a performing musician (*ibid.*). For the purposes of this study, I will refer to the *deep structure* as *acting as* or *being* a musician.

The *implicit structure* involves acculturation to the profession through the assimilation of certain values, principles and beliefs. This may, for example, involve valuing and esteeming certain genres of music, and their associated skills, over others. These values will shape the aspiring professional’s pursuit of excellence. For example an aspiring jazz musician will seek to develop improvisational skills, while an aspiring classical musician will seek to remain true to an authentic representation of a written canon. The *implicit structure* is inherent in the discipline and commitment required by the student, and a tacit dedication to the pursuit of professional excellence; as one pianist in Bloom’s (1985) study puts it:

to make a career, give concerts, become famous, continue to play the music the way you want to hear it, and make a lot of money, and all of those things (p.65).

According to Shulman (2005), signature pedagogies are pervasive and routine within their particular professions, but they are complex. Routine and habit enable the learner to focus on increasingly complex subject matter; in the case of music, this involves the performance of increasingly difficult repertoire. However, Shulman (2005) argues that habit can be

a dangerous source of rigidity and perseveration [and] by forcing all kinds of learning to fit a limited range of teaching, [can] necessarily distort learning in some manner (p.56).

In relation to instrumental education, Swanwick states that there has been ‘a tendency to equate more with better’ (1999, p. 77). He argues that ‘it is the musical range that needs extension and the question is not “how many notes?” but “how many layers?”’ of skill and understanding exist (*ibid.*). In examining the signature pedagogy of instrumental education, this study will seek explore if perseveration and rigidity exist in the teaching practices of instrumental teachers.

Different professions conform to their own signature pedagogy and therefore can be ‘prone to inertia’ (Shulman, 2005, p.58). This phenomenon of inertia in music education is referred to as ‘professional myopia’ by Jones (2007, p.3), who laments that music educators (classroom and instrumental) do not apply sufficient critical and strategic judgement to effect change in the profession. He points out that although music and society have changed considerably throughout the 20th Century, music teaching methods and curricula have not. This stagnation within the profession may be a consequence of underlying institutional factors which are deeply rooted and passed on from teacher to student through the generations. These institutional factors will be considered in the next section.

2.3 Institutional Governance of Instrumental Education

In Ireland, instrumental teaching is not regulated by a state examination system, and this provision instead comes under the influence of independent professional bodies, which set the standards for the profession. In the UK, O’Neill (1996) found that instrumental teachers

use the ABRSM syllabus to organise their curriculum and monitor teaching and learning effectiveness through their pupils’ examinations results (p.5).

In Ireland there is also evidence that professional bodies, in particular the examination boards, have played a significant role in shaping how instrumental teaching practices have developed (Heneghan, 2001).

Many of the professional institutions which provide accreditation for instrumental teachers and students, have a history dating back to the 19th Century. The main Irish board, the RIAM, dates back to 1848 and the ABRSM held its first examinations in Britain in 1890. The ABRSM was founded 'to promote high standards of musical education and assessment' and particularly to improve standards among applicants for places to the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (ABRSM, 2010, p.1). The *raison d'être* for its existence was, therefore, more the production of professional musicians rather than the general music education of students (Salaman, 1994).

In Ireland, there is a historical divergence in third level music education provision, between academic and performance based programmes. The music programmes at Ireland's universities generally have musicological and/or academic foundations. On the other hand, programmes focusing on preparation for a performance career follow a classical conservatoire approach and are delivered at a small number of specialist music schools or colleges. Up to the late 1980s the latter group awarded diplomas, and have only been awarding performance degrees since their amalgamation with Institutes of Technology (IOTs) or universities. An alternative route to accreditation for instrumental teachers and performers was via the Associate and Licentiate Diplomas awarded through UK or Irish examination boards, where students prepared for the examinations locally with their own teachers, and presented for summative examinations on completion of a prescriptive programme of performance and study.

The difference in professional preparation between academic and performance based programmes has contributed to the perpetuation of different pedagogical approaches in classroom music and instrumental education. Graduates from the universities tended to seek employment in secondary schools, while those emerging from the music schools were not eligible for this sector, and became performing musicians, and instrumental teachers, mainly in the private sector. The perpetuation of the practico-academic divide in music education will be further examined in Chapter 3.

Instrumental teaching can be a solitary pursuit with teachers having little opportunity for professional contact with one another. The professional bodies provided the main support for instrumental teachers through in-service, professional development, and accreditation for their pupils. One of the primary ways in which the professional bodies have impacted on instrumental education is through accreditation provided by the graded examination system. The following section will therefore examine how this system has impacted historically on instrumental education, with particular focus on the Irish context.

2.3.1 The role of examinations and assessment

Historically, the graded examination system has been strongest in former British colonies. Boyton (2006) states that as a system, the ABRSM was ‘brilliant’, providing a ‘portable system for certification of music skills’ (p.94). This ‘portability’ allowed it to take root in many countries across the British Empire, and to reach rather remote places from Malaysia to the west of Ireland.

The system has, for several decades, had its critics. Broadfoot (1996) described the graded examination system as ‘designed to increase motivation and attainment by the provision of short-term mastery objectives’ (p.194), but stated that ‘such curriculum and assessment packages are fundamentally a *source of control*’ (*ibid.*, original

emphasis). Others viewed the graded examination system as a form of colonial control.

Boyton, who experienced ABRSM examinations in her native Malaysia, stated that

the ABRSM, my parents, my teacher, myself – participated willingly if unwittingly in an ideological process that ultimately reinforced the colonizers' subjugation of the colonized (2006, p.92).

Although a primary objective of the graded examination system was to improve standards, there is some evidence that it did not always achieve that desired outcome in Ireland. As far back as 1952, Professor Aloys Fleischmann of University College Cork had this to say on the subject:

One feature of the use of examinations is disturbing, namely, the habit formed by many teachers of allowing their students a whole year in which to prepare the scales, study and pieces for a grade, so they do practically nothing else. This is definitely bad for teacher and for pupil. Instead of the examination being a test of the pupil's progress, it becomes the only progress ... This form of examination madness has affected even our Schools of Music ... One would like to see many more entries [in competitions and examinations] for the pianoforte duets and other ensemble work (Fleischmann, 1952, pp.130-131).

Fleischmann's comments suggest that teachers, through adherence to the graded examination syllabus, focused on limited repertoire and adopted prescriptive teaching methods.

The dominance of the graded examination system, which promoted a Western art tradition, also had other consequences for music education in Ireland. It was previously mentioned that traditional Irish music was largely ignored within the educational establishment (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2003). This may have been a consequence of the absence of formal accreditation for traditional Irish music within the education system. Traditional Irish music performance has only relatively recently become accepted for entry to third level formal music education. Although probably an unintended consequence, the accreditation of classical music through the graded examination system meant that the unaccredited indigenous Irish music tradition was marginalised within the educational establishment.

The dominance of this assessment system served to establish the superiority of one genre over others within the educational system. In consequence, the graded examination system contributed to the pervasiveness or dearth of certain pedagogical practices in instrumental music (Salaman, 1994; O'Sullivan, 2010). Aspects of instrumental learning, such as group performance, ensemble, improvisation, critical listening and aural training have been marginalised because they were afforded less weight in the examination system (Salaman, 1994).

My IFS examined the repertoire that n=67 students played over one year. The students were aged 10 to 18, and n=57 had taken graded examinations. Unsurprisingly, the findings indicated that the examination syllabi dominated the musical repertoire of students who took examinations; this repertoire represented mainly Western art culture, and certain genres were totally absent. The examination repertoire played by these students included no popular music, film/show music, or traditional Irish music. The only contemporary genre represented in the examination repertoire was jazz which accounted for 18%. However, after Grade 5, only Western art music was represented in the examination repertoire, with all other genres being totally absent (O'Sullivan, 2010). Students' preferences for listening and favourite repertoire were inconsistent with the repertoire they were required to play for examinations.

Driscoll (2009) undertook a study of attitudes to music education amongst n=820 young people aged 13 to 14, at 33 schools in one local authority in the UK. In all, 51% had taken extracurricular instrumental lessons at some stage. Her study reports that, 49% of those who had taken lessons 'hated taking exams, [although] only 28% hated practising' (Driscoll, 2009, p.49). Passing examinations rated third last in a list of the best things about learning to play a musical instrument. On the other hand, disliking examinations was rated only seventh in a list of twelve reasons for giving up (n=58

indicating this). The main reason given for discontinuing music was ‘boring lessons’ (n = 146 of all respondents).

A possible reason for boring lessons may be that they are dominated by the acquisition of skills required for good results at examinations. Driscoll (2009) cited an Ofsted study which reported that lessons were found to be dominated by the

deciphering of notation and development of technique ... at the expense of opportunities to improvise, compose, and develop aural skills, musicianship and improve ensemble skills (Driscoll, 2009, p.48).

This finding would support Salaman’s (1994) view that these latter musical skills are not well developed, a fact which he attributes to the pressure to comply with an examination system that is technique and reading focused.

There is some evidence that examinations provide extrinsic motivation for learning to play an instrument. Driscoll (2009) reported that students were surprisingly positive about passing graded examinations indicating that ‘it provides a clear marker of progress and achievement’ (p.51). These findings mirror the complex attitude to examinations reported in my IFS. My study found that although students did not enjoy examinations, they considered examinations important for learning music, and expressed personal satisfaction on achieving a grade.

Hallam (2008a) found that students practise more when an examination is imminent and the type of practice done is different, with more time being spent on technical studies and aural tests. Davidson & Scutt (1999) claim that practice habits are impacted upon by examinations which

seem to provide critically important peaks within a cycle of learning which range from high-level quantities of regular practice running up to the examination, to periods of more relaxed, informal engagement with playing in the period afterwards (p.93).

Thus examinations change practice patterns and provide short-term motivational stimulus.

The graded examinations carry high stakes, and in the absence of other evaluative mechanisms, they are often thought to reflect, not just students' progress, but also the teachers' professional competence. Parents seek out teachers who get 'good' results (Davidson & Scutt, 1999). O'Neill (1996) claims that teachers use the examination boards as a form of 'quality control' for monitoring teaching and learning effectiveness (p.5). When tests and examinations are used in this way, they can affect the ways in which pupils are taught (Harlen, 2003). The challenges relating to assessment in instrumental education are highlighted by Fautley (2010). He points out the tensions that have arisen when the 'talented few are now measured alongside the many, the general population' (2010, p.202). He states that

The ubiquitous nature of ABRSM type of performing examinations can act as an unwitting model for the promotion of performing in ways which, ultimately, might not be overly helpful. This is because ABRSM examinations are rightly concerned with a hierarchy of instrumental performance aimed at performing to the highest standards (p.114).

Fautley acknowledges that the 'talented few' should not be measured against the general population. I would argue however, that a majority of students taking instrumental music lessons, and not just the 'talented few', will be exposed to the graded examination system. It will be noted later in the thesis that some music schools demand students to pass annual examinations to retain their places. Although not all examination syllabi stipulate it, the implicit expectation that students will take an annual examination (regardless of their readiness) puts added pressure on students (O'Sullivan, 2010). This may not therefore be the most appropriate model for the 'general' (as opposed to talented) instrumental student who might be discouraged if they do not meet the high objectives of the examination system.

One of the primary aims of the ABRSM graded examination system is 'motivation and inspiration, working from a carefully structured syllabus towards a

definite goal' (ABRSM, 2012). Some of the studies reported above indicate mixed views on the part of students towards examinations: although they did not like doing examinations, passing graded examinations provide a sense of satisfaction for some students (Driscoll, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2010). The examinations alone are unlikely to maintain students' engagement in instrumental education, and consequently the following sections will examine other factors which may impact on students' sustained engagement with instrumental lessons.

2.4 Factors Impacting on Student Engagement

Factors other than examinations have been found to be significant in predicting success in instrumental lessons; these include parental support, personality, ability to understand instructions and approaches to learning (Hallam, 2006). For example, students who drop out often perceive themselves as less musically able and feel musically inadequate (*ibid.*). Following a review of the literature on motivation and musical identity, Hallam (2006) concludes that

identifying oneself as a musician requires a commitment to music which in turn demands that engagement with music is enjoyable and active (p.153).

Green (2008) and Downey (2009) have observed the commitment and passion of informal musicians and have sought to explore how learning techniques employed by informal learners could be applied to formal music learning. As autodidacts, the motivation for informal learning is intrinsic but encouraged by social learning situations. Kemp (1996) found that musical identity was an important motivator in musical achievement, and this aspect could be influenced by societal and family factors. Parent and teacher characteristics and interpersonal relationships have also been found to contribute to student success in instrumental lessons (Creech, 2006). In the following sections, I will explore these issues in more details beginning with the question of attrition in instrumental education.

2.4.1 Motivation and attrition

Playing music is viewed by most people as a desirable activity, yet the drop-out rate remains high. Driscoll (2009) reports that the uptake for instrumental lessons in the UK peaks at age 11 with a 14% participation rate amongst children of that age, declining to 9% by age 14. This trend is borne out by ABRSM examination figures published annually, which indicate at least a 50% drop off in the numbers taking examinations between Grades 1 and 4 (ABRSM, 2008). Hallam, Rogers & Creech (2005) found that the drop-out from music lessons is particularly high in the transition between primary and secondary school. This drop-out also coincides with the increasing demand of school work, and increased independence in individual musical taste amongst students.

Boredom with lessons has already been highlighted as a reason for discontinuing music lessons (Driscoll, 2009). In addition, students cited boredom as a reason for not starting, which signifies a negative preconceived notion about instrumental learning. Citing a survey of Local Authority Music Services in the UK (Hallam, Rogers & Creech 2005), Creech (2010) reported that the main reason given for dropping out of music lessons was 'loss of interest' (p.307), although other reasons were given, such as the competing demands of school and other extra-curricular activities.

Other researchers argue that discontinuing lessons is not due to a lack of interest in music *per se*, because music plays an important role in adolescents' lives, in terms of group identity, self-concept and emotional expression (Hargreaves & North, 1997). A study in the UK involving 1,479 students, indicated that 91% of children and young people aged 7 to 19 reported that they liked listening to music, but only 39% engage in music-making activities (Lamont *et al.*, 2003). It would seem, therefore, that there is some disconnect between music education and the role of music in students' lives (Green, 2008). This may be a factor of what Creech (2010) calls a 'personalised learning agenda' (p.299). Many people engaging in extra-curricular activities have a

clear idea of what they want from a non-compulsory learning experience. In the case of music, this idea may include the desire to play music that they are familiar with and enjoy.

Creech (2010) reports that standards endorsed by the Federation of Music Services include respecting

pupils' social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds and setting challenging teaching and learning objectives that take account of each individual's background and interests (p.299).

This view of teaching promotes a learner-centred approach where individual needs are met. There is however, some evidence that instrumental learning is discipline centred and teacher directed rather than student-centred. For example, my IFS found that, although very few students listened to classical music, and most expressed a preference for popular music, most of the music played for examinations was from the Western art music tradition (O'Sullivan, 2010). This finding supports the view that pupils' social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds are not always taken into account (Green, 2008). For improved student retention Creech (2010) advocates

developing activities that will sustain interest, adjusting the demands for practising, responding to pupil musical genre preferences and awareness of interpersonal issues (p.308).

In informal music learning, (whether in traditional or popular music cultures), music genre preferences have been identified as being important (Green, 2008; Downey, 2009; Creech, 2010), and social contexts for learning are significant motivators for young people. The following paragraphs will look at motivation in the light of research on informal learning in instrumental music.

2.4.2 Informal music-making as motivation

In recent years, more attention has been paid to informal learning in music education where passion and commitment are recognised as key self-motivating factors to learning

(Green, 2002 and 2008; Downey, 2009). Downey (2009) recognises a level of sophistication in young peoples' musical tastes and interests, indicating that their preferences are not just confined to popular music genres. She states that

for many young people 'their culture' is multi-faceted and incorporates many different musics, often depending on national, regional and local differences (p.47).

She found that students are motivated to play traditional Irish music through the varied social contexts in which the learning takes place, and that learners of traditional Irish music are constantly engaged in informal learning.

Green's work (2002 and 2008) in the area of 'informal learning' in music, draws on an understanding of the learning practices of jazz, traditional and popular musicians. She recognises that formal music education has much to learn from these traditions where learning is largely social in nature through immersion in culture, practice and tradition; and where learning is by aural imitation, improvisation and experimentation. Green (2008) proposed a new classroom pedagogy based on how popular musicians learn, to effect change in teaching and learning practices leading to more engagement in music for school-going students. These approaches include choosing their own music (music that they identify with), playing by ear, playing with friends, learning in a personal way at their own pace using trial and error, and integrating different learning skills such as listening, improvising and imitating. This innovative classroom pedagogy has enjoyed some success in mainstream music classrooms (Musical Futures, 2013, homepage). There is little evidence, however, that this approach, which requires social and peer learning, has filtered through to instrumental practice, which continues to be a mainly solitary pursuit.

The importance of the role of the teacher in implementing change is evident in Green's work. A critical issue for the success of any teaching initiative, and in particular

initiating change, is the agency of teachers themselves. The following section will therefore explore the impact of institutional culture and teacher preparation on instrumental teacher identity and practice.

2.5 Music Teacher Identity and Practice

In a review of theory and research into general classroom teaching practices, Rathgen (2006) found that teachers bring their own ‘educational biographies and ... well-worn and commonsensical images of teachers’ work’ (p.580) to their practice. Her research suggested that practitioners rarely change their practice based on research. She claims that teachers have a lack of awareness of how institutions and dominant cultures influence practice.

Smith (2002) observed that people are unaware of how their day to day functions are unknowingly and unwittingly influenced by distant institutions. She states

the everyday/everynight of our contemporary living is organized by and coordinated with what people, mostly unknown and never to be known by us, are doing elsewhere and at different times (p.19).

Teachers are often unaware of how their everyday teaching practices are influenced by dominant institutions and cultures. On the other hand, Giddens (2008, p.16) counsels against conceiving of ‘structures of domination built into social institutions ... grinding out “docile bodies” who behave like automata’. He was of the view that agents’ practical consciousness ‘can be altered by [their] socialization and learning experiences’ (p.7).

Teacher identity as “teacher” or “musician” is viewed as a factor in shaping individual approaches to music teaching (Dolloff, 1999). Bernard (2004) refers to the ‘dual dissonance’ of teacher-performers in music education. Because their musical expertise is attained over a long period of time, student teachers often come to undergraduate teaching programmes with well evolved self-concepts as musicians, but

not as teachers. In a study of music teacher preparation within a university, Dolloff (1999) found that students appeared to ‘lack any on-going construction of their identity as teacher, except in the form of “musician” as “teacher”’ (p.192). When asked to provide representations of their ideal teacher, most referred to a former studio teacher; few based it on their classroom experiences. This highlights the impact of the dyadic relationship in instrumental education, not only for the individual student-teacher’s development, but also for *their* pupils as the relationships are self-perpetuating through the generations.

Georgii-Hemming & Westvall (2010) reported that student teachers in Sweden found their studies in general pedagogy to be more helpful than those of music pedagogy. The students reported that

during their general education studies they had had a great deal of guidance from the university lecturers in ‘transforming’ the goals of the curriculum into practice ... Lecturers in music teacher education, however, did not seem to apply the same approach (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010, p.326).

Some music mentors even decried new approaches to music teacher education, claiming that they were not as rigorous as their own training. The student-teachers, however, were very open to more democratic approaches to teaching and learning, despite having experienced a strong master-apprentice tradition in their own musical training, and in some cases in their teacher education (*ibid.*).

In a study of one-to-one teaching practices at a conservatoire, Gaunt (2006) refers to an implicit ‘framework of socially situated learning’ in instrumental teaching (p.61) where

teachers were conscious of the uniqueness of students’ needs in learning, but did not always adapt their teaching accordingly (Gaunt, 2006, p.1).

Instead teacher-student relationships resembled that of master-apprentice, with students receiving ‘an established body of wisdom and knowledge’ (p.55). She found that the

third level music students in her study often held the views of their teachers. This suggests linearity in terms of beliefs being passed on from one generation of musicians to another, with little opportunity for the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

In a study of teaching practices in Sweden, Rostvall (2003) found that music teachers applied the same methods regardless of the individual needs of their students and that, in the one-to-one instrumental lesson, there was a strong asymmetric distribution of power leading to a negative impact on student learning. Teachers controlled the lesson, often ignoring students' verbal inputs, and students were rarely asked for opinions. Somewhat paradoxically, teachers listened more to the students' inputs in group lessons and in these settings students had the opportunity to support or help one another. One-to-one lessons were dominated by method books, therefore 'the content of the lesson was not music as a sounding phenomenon, but music as symbolic objects' (Rostvall, 2003, p.221).

Some authors argue that instrumental teaching is idiosyncratic and personalised, with teachers basing their approaches on tradition, common sense, and on their own experiences as students, teachers and musicians (Swanwick, 1999; Perrson, 2000; Daniel, 2004). In studying the practices of six piano teachers operating in very different contexts, from individual private lessons to a conservatoire, Lennon (1996) found that teachers had highly individual approaches. The focus of her study was on 'musical and pedagogical discourse' rather than on teacher-pupil relationships (Lennon, 1996, p.109). She described a tripartite model within the lesson involving the teacher, the student and the musical content. She found that teachers generally focused on issues outlined in the literature of piano pedagogy, which included technique, sight-reading, phrasing and articulation, and communication. She concluded that a more reflective approach to teacher education was required, where teachers would develop as responsive

practitioners, capable of adapting to changing contexts and individual student needs.

Lennon (1996) concluded that her study

negates the “obviousness” of piano teaching, drawing attention as it does to the infinite variety of contexts, the fascinating complexity of the process, and the highly contextualised and individualised nature of the transactions (p.263).

Instrumental pedagogy, therefore represents a ‘fascinating complexity’ (*ibid.*), drawing on tradition and teachers’ personalised experience and life histories (Rathgen, 2006; Creech, 2006).

Creech (2012) identified different teaching styles, ranging from a highly directive, teacher-led (master-apprentice) approach to a ‘facilitative student-centred model’ (p.402). She found that a challenge for teachers was to provide leadership, imparting the knowledge required, while still remaining responsive to learners. In addition, teachers were operating

within a domain where the achievement of expertise only comes with much discipline and extensive application, yet where the onus is on the teacher to provide enjoyment (Creech, 2006, p.114).

In a study of teacher-pupil-parent interaction amongst 263 violin teachers and their pupils, Creech (2006) found that ‘interpersonal experience accounts for some variability in a range of teaching and learning outcomes’ (p.376). In general Creech’s findings supported previous studies, reporting that lessons were often teacher-led with pupils rarely leading or directing the lesson. Teachers expressed greater self-efficacy when the focus was teacher centred and directive, with teachers leading and controlling the teaching and learning process. Drop-out from instrumental lessons was greater where there was discordance between the actors in the process, e.g. where teachers were fearful of the parents or parents had little confidence in the teacher, and pupil-teacher relationships were consequently weak (*ibid.*). Creech (2006) concludes that for more effective learning, it is important that teachers understand and apply different

interpersonal strategies and relationships and apply them in a reflective manner to their own practice. The following section will examine the role of parents as critical stakeholders in the process of instrumental learning.

2.6 Parental Involvement

The role of parents in supporting their children's musical development and achievement is incontrovertible (Bloom, 1985; O'Neill, 1996; Davidson & Scutt, 1999; Hallam, 2006; Creech, 2006). Bloom (1985) found that in the early development of successful concert pianists,

music was an integral part of these children's homes ... Music was not only pervasive, it was also highly valued (p.43).

In Bloom's study, the pianists reported that, as children, they had no choice about getting involved with music: 'it was forced on them' (*ibid.*) i.e. it was the parents' decision.

The significance of parents' involvement, particularly in the early stages of instrumental learning, is also supported by O'Neill (1996) who found that the optimal conditions for achievement during the first year of instrumental tuition included: one-to-one lessons, with a private teacher, in the home environment, all of which rely on the support of parents. Creech & Hallam (2003) found that

parents who ... possess a strong sense of self-efficacy construct a role for themselves whereby, in addition to choosing the instrument and facilitating the child to receive tuition, they may engage in behaviour and activities which ... have been linked to music achievement (i.e. providing external motivation for the child, supervising practice, instilling focus and discipline in practice, attending lessons, communicating with the teacher and responding to the child's wish for parental help and support) (Creech & Hallam, 2003, p.34).

Creech (2010a) identified different types of parental support. High levels of 'Behavioural support' which included 'Monitoring, supporting and assisting with lessons and practice' (p.13), were evident amongst the parents in her sample. 'Cognitive/intellectual' support, which involved providing extra-curricular opportunities

to experience music and engage in musical activities, was also high (*ibid.*). However, the highest reported level of support was ‘personal support’ which involved parents taking their children’s views into account, providing praise and being aware of the importance of allowing a good teacher-pupil relationship to develop (*ibid.*). Pupils’ persistence with lessons was best where there were harmonious relationships in this triadic relationship. However, persistence with lessons was also high where there was a strong autonomous relationship between the pupil and teacher. Creech (2010a) concluded that it is important for the parent ‘to remain as a supremely interested audience’ (p.29), but flexibility is required. The parent should, for example, maintain enough distance for the pupil-teacher relationship to develop, but be able to intervene in practical ways when necessary. Success in instrumental education is optimal when there are ‘shared purpose, goals and role expectations’ (Creech & Hallam, 2003, p.30) between teachers, pupils and parents.

2.7 Hegemony in Instrumental Education

Although shared purpose amongst participants does lead to increased success for individual students in the process of instrumental learning, the absence of critical evaluation and divergent thinking may also lead to what Shulman called ‘rigidity and perseveration’ (2005, p. 56). Gramsci’s concept of hegemony suggests that people can be conditioned to accept a particular social or cultural perspective of the world. Social conditioning may reduce peoples’ sense of agency to make changes (Beck & Purcell, 2010). People become resigned, through familiarity, to accept their own situation as the norm (Smith, 2002). Such is their conditioning that they are often unaware of how their lives hook into those of others and to institutions beyond their immediate experience (*ibid.*). They become, therefore, complicit in maintaining the *status quo*.

Green (2003) holds the view that prevailing ideologies are maintained through legitimisation, *and* reification. She states that:

ideology helps to perpetuate social relations, through the processes of reification and legitimisation. These processes tend to make social relations seem natural and legitimate “as they already are” (2003, p.5)

She defines reification as ‘to attribute an abstract concept with thing-like properties’ (*ibid.*). Musical ability could, for example, be said to be reified through measurement, whereby degrees of musical ability (an abstract concept) are legitimised through the stratification provided by the graded examination system. This in turn commodifies instrumental learning, providing a measure of abstract concepts of ability and creativity and a shared understanding for all participants. Such commodification can lead to rigidity, with certain practices becoming fixed and participants accepting these as the norm.

Throughout this study, I will be examining the aspirations, expectations and attitudes of the different actors involved in music education and exploring how their views converge and diverge. In the final chapter (Chapter 8), I will return to this discussion to explore how these expressed views are impacted upon by hegemonic factors.

2.8 Emergent Themes

In this chapter I have provided a critical consideration of some of the dominant literature and research relating to the issues in my research. From my view, a number of key points emerge.

The institutional bodies which govern instrumental education in Ireland date back to the 19th Century, and have their roots in an Anglo-centric model which was dominant during the Colonial period. Although instrumental learning can take place in

many different social and cultural contexts, the formal instrumental lesson takes place in a particular cultural context dominated by the study of Western art music.

The practico-academic divide in music education in Ireland has a historical basis. Practitioners in instrumental and classroom education follow different educational and professional paths, which has led to the emergence and perseveration of different pedagogical practices in these two distinct loci of practice.

An assessment model that promotes ‘the highest standard’ (Fautley, 2010, p.114) for the ‘talented few’ (p.202), is not be the most appropriate for the general student body. Yet most students engaging in instrumental learning are expected to participate in this assessment system. The graded examination system promotes the learning of skills related to the performance of Western art music; it omits certain skills, does not promote ensemble playing and can result in learning being focused on examination requirements, thus impeding both teaching and learning. In particular, this system does not support the transferability or applicability of skills to other genres.

Although certain practices are pervasive in the field of instrumental education, teaching can be idiosyncratic and personalised. Teachers are often influenced by their own educational biographies, and unaware of how they are influenced by institutions and dominant cultures of practice. Music teacher preparation has traditionally focused more on musical development rather than on broader educational issues.

The one-to-one model of teaching can promote dependence on the part of the student. Students frequently adopt and hold the views of their teacher, with exposure to, and cross-fertilisation of, new ideas being limited, not only for students but also between teachers. There is an accepted ‘body of wisdom and knowledge’ (Gaunt, 2006, p.55) which is understood and relayed amongst the participants, regardless of individual learner needs or interests.

The role of parents is important in music learning, as they initiate and support the learning both financially and by providing moral support. Very often, in the early stages of learning, parents make the decisions and children do not have a say regarding participation and practice. Best results emerge when parents support their children but allow space for the teacher-pupil relationship to develop.

Although the impact of the professional institutions on pedagogy and assessment in instrumental education was examined in this chapter, the issue as to *why* and *how* the professional bodies dominate and support a particular culture of instrumental education was not explored. I have suggested that hegemonic influences come to bear on practice, with the participants participating in a culture which has been reinforced and legitimised over time through dominant institutional practices. Chapter 3 will focus particularly on Bernstein's theories on the 'recontextualising' fields of knowledge, and these will be applied to the different institutions of music education to problematise these complex issues.

CHAPTER 3

Recontextualising Fields in Music Education

Fundamental to my argument is that the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse. In one sense, this is obvious because it is the moral discourse that creates the criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture, etc. In school, it tells the children what to do, where they can go, and so on. It is quite clear that regulative discourse creates the rules of social order (Bernstein, 2000, p.34, original emphasis).

3.1 Introduction

It has already been suggested that instrumental and classroom music pedagogies have occupied two parallel ideological universes, developing distinct philosophies, pedagogies, curricula and assessment strategies (Heneghan, 2001; Kennell, 2002). In practice this has led to instrumental education being focused on the specific skills required for ‘Instrumental Proficiency’ (Fautley, 2010, p.115) including: technical development (primarily through scales in the early stages); sight-reading skills; aural skills; and implicit reviewing and evaluating skills (*ibid*). On the other hand, classroom music involves composing, listening, performing, reviewing, evaluating, along with social, emotional and personal learning leading to ‘Musical Understanding’ (Fautley, 2010, p.115). The description of instrumental learning provided by Fautley (2010) and supported by other studies (Rostvall, 2003; Daniel, 2006) presents a narrow focus, whilst that for classroom music suggests a more expansive type of learning.

The MEND report refers to the ‘negative burden’ and the ‘damaging dichotomy’ that the ‘practico-academic’ divide creates (Heneghan, 2001, p.32), and points to a ‘lack of understanding and intolerance between [the] professional groups’ (p. 202) on either side of this divide. In examining the signature pedagogy of instrumental music, this study will raise questions as to why instrumental teaching has developed along different lines to classroom music pedagogy.

The citation by Bernstein at the outset of this chapter argues that the ‘regulative discourse’ is the dominant one, and herein lies a possible explanation for the dichotomy in music education. He argues that whoever controls the pedagogical device ‘has the power to regulate consciousness’ (2000, p.38). Classroom and instrumental education have come under different regulatory institutions or agencies; the former being regulated by the official or state sector, and the latter by professional institutions. I will argue that their pedagogies correspond respectively with Bernstein’s ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ models of education (Bernstein, 1996), and that the actors operate within these structures, often being unaware of the institutional impact on their own behaviours (Smith, 2002).

In what follows, I will examine some dimensions of Basil Bernstein’s pedagogical codes, which shed light on how these different pedagogical modes have emerged. Presenting Bernstein’s taxonomies provides a lens by which to explore the cultures which influence praxis and will enable the classification of two distinct models of practice in music education. The intention is to provide a set of theoretical tools that will frame the data analysis later in my study. It is however, important to state that the range and complexity of Bernstein’s work means that I have had to be selective. Thus I have isolated some key principles that help to explore the ‘two parallel universes’ that I have described.

3.2 Bernstein's Recontextualising Fields

Bernstein makes an analogy between Max Weber's religious paradigm of 'prophet, priest and laity' and the pedagogical field of 'producers, reproducers or recontextualisers, and acquirers' (1996, p.51). Here I will relate this schema to the field of music education. Linking Bernstein's three areas of action to the field of instrumental music, the 'producers' represent the realm of music production and performance, i.e. the purveyors of the canon, which has traditionally been Western art music, and are embodied by the concert musician or master performer.

The recontextualisers or reproducers are those who 'constitute specific pedagogic discourses' (Bernstein, 1996, p.46). At this level decisions are made as to 'who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions' thus creating 'specialised communications ... contexts and contents' (*ibid.*). In instrumental pedagogy, recontextualisation has been regulated, over the past 150 years, by professional institutions such as specialist music colleges, conservatoires and examination boards. These institutions have determined the pedagogical materials and contexts for the transmission of predetermined sets of skills, which have been packaged for the acquirer by means of a graded system from beginner to professional level. This incremental development is evident, for example, in the graded examination system, which provides a 'ladder' from entry level (Grade 1), through to advanced level (Grade 8); progressing to professional level through Diplomas and Fellowships for the production of teachers, who then become Bernstein's 'reproducers'.

The acquirers are the students or receivers of the skills and knowledge. Bernstein states that 'the pedagogical device can restrict or enhance the potential discourse available to the pedagogised' (1996, p.42), and stresses that the pedagogical device is '*not ideologically free*' (*ibid.*, original emphasis). Questions on whether the pedagogical

device (Key Signature Pedagogy) serves the cultural interests of today's instrumental students, and whether it restricts or enhances their experience of music education, will be explored in later chapters.

Bernstein (1996) distinguishes between 'official recontextualising fields' (ORF) and 'pedagogical recontextualising fields' (PRF); the former being determined by official or State agencies and the latter from within the discourse or professional field. I argue that instrumental teaching has been constituted within the PRF, while classroom music has been influenced more by the ORF, and that this goes some way towards explaining the practico-academic divergence in pedagogical approaches in these two fields of music education.

3.3 Bernstein's 'Competence' and 'Performance' Pedagogic Models

Bernstein's (1996) contrasting 'performance' and 'competence' pedagogic models emerge from two different modalities of organising knowledge (p.55). These modalities correspond respectively to 'strong' and 'weak' classifications in terms of how control and influence is exerted in the particular pedagogic fields (2000, p.7). Strong and weak classifications are determined by the 'degrees of insulation' of the discourses (1996, p.21). In strong classification there is strong insularity; i.e. 'each category has its own unique identity, its own unique voice, its own specialised rules of internal relations' (*ibid.*). An example of strong classification is the music conservatoire, which is a very specialised context for learning, with a focus on music performance (Schön, 1987; Gaunt, 2006).

Where disciplines are less insular, classification is said to be weak. Weak classification is more likely to be associated with academic discourses. For example, a music programme at a university might be influenced by discourses outside the music domain; these could include ethnography (ethnomusicology), physics (acoustics),

biology and psychology (psycho-acoustics), socio-cultural phenomena (sociology of music), even technology, business, marketing and law, which prepare music students for a contemporary work environment. The interplay of the different discourses blurs the boundaries of the core discipline, lessening the insularity. This is consistent with the trend towards more generalised Schools (as opposed to individual Departments), within universities and third level institutions, as a phenomenon of weakening boundaries (Bernstein, 1996). In weakening boundaries, influences at local level come into play, with social and cultural factors – even lecturers’ research interests – having an impact. On the other hand, strong boundaries are maintained by professional bodies where ‘specialised communications’, and ‘contexts and contents’ are predetermined, fixed and defined (Bernstein, 1996, p.46).

Because of the different spaces that classroom music and instrumental education occupy, their levels of insularity are diametrically opposite. Instrumental education has remained insular (strong classification), within the remit of specialist schools (conservatoires) and private teachers, and under the influence of the PRF. Conversely, classroom music is situated in the less insular environment of mainstream schools, with curriculum development coming under the influence of the ORF. The curricular boundaries between disciplines and subjects in mainstream schools are often blurred, with music included as part of a broader ‘arts’ programme which also includes drama and visual arts (NCCA, 2005). Obviously, in respect of music education and the ORF, different governments will have different approaches towards the curriculum and what counts as music education.

The dichotomy is self-perpetuating because of the structures within music teacher education. Graduates from the universities, where programmes are more academic, traditionally go into classroom teaching in secondary schools. Teacher

preparation for instrumental education remains under the influence of the PRF, with graduates emerging from the conservatoires to pursue performing careers or become instrumental teachers.

3.3.1 Summary of Bernstein's 'competence' and 'performance' models

RQ1 in my study involves examining what constitutes the signature pedagogy for instrumental music in Ireland and how it looks in practice. As well as Shulman's concept of 'signature pedagogy', Bernstein's 'performance' model will be included in the arsenal of theoretical tools for examining this pedagogy in Chapter 5. Table 3.2 maps Bernstein's 'performance' model against the characteristics of instrumental pedagogy which have been identified in the extant literature (Gaunt, 2006; Daniel, 2006; Rostvall, 2003; Driscoll, 2009). Prior to that however, Table 3.1 outlines Bernstein's two models, to indicate the opposite standpoints of these two models.

Table 3.1 shows that the 'competence' model represents a democratic approach to education, with local organisations, teachers and students having more input into the delivery of a curriculum. The teacher's role is that of mentor or facilitator of learning, and students are partners in the decisions relating to the selection, sequence and pace of learning. Learning is differentiated taking into account students' prior knowledge, strengths and differences. Classification is weak, in that processes are malleable and open to change based on constant evaluation of structures and processes, to ensure their effectiveness in the light of wider students and societal needs.

The 'performance' model outlined in Table 3.1, on the other hand, represents a highly structured model of education, with strong classification, focusing on serving the perceived needs of the profession. Here teacher and student agency is weaker, and the selection, sequence and pace of learning are highly prescriptive. Learning takes place in specialised settings and spaces. Evaluation and assessment are product based, and

taken as indicators of teacher effectiveness and student ability. In addition, this approach is legitimised by assessment processes which certify the learning and set the standards for entry to the profession.

Table 3.2 shows that the prevailing model of instrumental pedagogy, as outlined in the existing literature, has many of the characteristics of this ‘performance’ model; *inter alia*, a pre-packaged selection of skills, a focus on lesson mechanics, and product orientated, summative assessment. Although not all of this literature emanates from Ireland – most comes from other countries including Australia (Daniel, 2004), Sweden (Rostvall, 2003) and the UK (Salaman, 1994; O’Neill, 1996; Driscoll, 2009) – I will argue that many of the features outlined also pertain to instrumental education in Ireland. The system in Ireland has strong classification, remaining under the influence of the professional institutions, and being carried on in specialised locations. The focus is on a particular canon with composite skills being developed to achieve this end. The learner focuses on reproduction and faithful interpretation of texts, rather than on experimentation or improvisation. This is all regulated, assessed and evaluated by external institutions which frame the learning through prescriptive curricula and related text or method books. The only area that the instrumental model diverges from Bernstein’s ‘performance’ model relates to cost, because one-to-one education is expensive.

Bernstein's Competence Model	Bernstein's Performance Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification is weak. • Teachers and organisations have more autonomous control of delivery, and resources are less likely to be 'pre-packaged' (1996, p.62). • Learner⁸ focused, taking into account existing competence and prior experience. • Learning based on enquiry through projects, and a range of experience and shared learning. • The learner has more control over the selection, sequence and pace of the learning. • Learning is more process than product based, with rules for student work being implicit. • Emphasis on differences rather than stratification of learners. • Learners have more control over learning contexts and spaces. • Time does not explicitly dictate the sequencing of learning. • Evaluation is process based, with the emphasis on learner progress. • Control of the learning process is negotiated with the focus on the intentions, dispositions, relations and reflexivity of the learner. • The product of learner performance takes into account cognitive, social and affective development, with the teacher being the primary reader of these processes. • Transmission costs are generally higher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification is strong. • External regulation of curriculum, selection, sequencing, pace of learning leading towards 'specialised futures' (1996, p.62). • Focus is on the specialisation of subjects and skills. • Procedures are clearly marked in terms of form and function in the acquisition of knowledge. • Learning is structured in terms of selection, sequence and pace. • Learning is product oriented and rules for production of learner work are explicit. • Learner work or performance is graded and stratified. • Spaces are clearly marked and regulated. • Time marks or punctuates the sequencing and rate of learning. • Evaluation is product based with the emphasis on what is missing in the product or performance. • Control of the learning process is explicit in terms of space, time and discourse, which legitimises the structures and classifications. • Learner performance is graded and objectivised and 'inherits the professionalism of the teacher'; it gives rise 'to a potential repair service ... practice and distribution of blame' (1996, p.61). • Transmission costs are generally less than the 'competence' models.

Table 3.1: Summary of Bernstein's Competence and Performance Models

⁸ I have replaced Bernstein's 'acquirer' with 'learner'.

Bernstein's Performance Model	Mapping Features of Formal Instrumental Tuition (from the Extant Literature)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification is strong. • External regulation of curriculum, selection, sequencing, pacing etc. leading towards 'specialised futures' (1996, p.62). • Focus is on the specialisation of subjects and skills. • Procedures are clearly marked in terms of form and function in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. • Learning is structured in terms of selection, sequence and pace. • Learning is product oriented and rules for production of learner work are explicit. • Learner work or performance is graded and stratified. • Spaces are clearly marked and regulated. • Time marks or punctuates the sequencing and rate of learning. • Evaluation is product based with emphasis on what is missing in the product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification for instrumental teaching is strong and directed by the professional institutions (Salaman, 1996; Heneghan, 2001; Gaunt, 2006). • The graded examination system defines curriculum from beginner to professional, with the paradigm of the virtuoso musician representing the specialised future (Salaman, 1994; Spruce, 1996). • Focus is on a prescribed Western art canon and developing techniques to perform within that particular genre (Salaman, 1994; Rostvall, 2009; Driscoll, 2009). • Procedures are classified into units such as technique, sight-reading, ear tests and theory rather than a holistic approach (Salaman, 1994; Rostvall, 2003; Daniel, 2006). • Selection is evident in what is present and omitted; for example improvisation is largely absent (Salaman, 1994; Rostvall, 2003). • Learner work focuses on faithful interpretation of text rather than on creativity and imagination (Rostvall, 2003). • Learner work is graded through the graded examination system (Swanwick, 1999; Colwell, 1999). • Teaching mainly takes place in the one-to-one setting within specialised locations (Gaunt, 2006; Beausang, 2002; Rostwall, 2003; Daniel, 2006). • The annual graded examination indicates the expectation of learning rates (Salaman, 1994; Broadfoot, 1996; Driscoll, 2009). • Evaluation is product and performance based and summative (Fleischmann, 1952; Salaman, 1994).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of the learning process is explicit in terms of space, time and discourse, and legitimises the structures and classifications. • Learner performance is graded and objectivised and ‘inheres the professionalism of the teacher’; it gives rise ‘to a potential repair service ... practice and distribution of blame’ (1996, p.61). • Transmission costs are generally less than the ‘competence’ models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions legitimise and explicitly structure learning through method books, graded examination syllabi and classical music discourse (Salaman, 1994; Broadfoot, 1996). • Teacher professionalism is often embedded in learner success; lack of success is often attributed to lack of learner ability. Examination boards are used as ‘quality control’ (Broadfoot, 1996; O’Neill, 1996; Rostvall, 2003;). • The one-to-one mode of teaching means that it is expensive, which may make it <i>élitist</i> (Heneghan, 2001).
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Table 3.2: *Aligning Bernstein’s Performance Model with features of formal Instrumental Education*

3.4 Discussion

The comparative summary presented in Table 3.2 does not reflect very well on teaching and learning processes in instrumental music, but the persistence of the practices outlined here is supported by the extant literature (Gaunt, 2006; Daniel, 2006; Rostvall, 2003; Driscoll, 2009). It has to be said, at this point, that such practices may not be universal, and that many instrumental teachers may employ creative pedagogical practices. Although green shoots are evident with Music Generation and changes have been occurring in other jurisdictions for some time (see section 8.7 for further discussion), this change has been quite slow coming to Ireland. I come to my study with a concern therefore, that the inherent historical conventions may conspire against teachers who wish to break away from the more restrictive practices, or indeed, that teachers may not be able to find alternative structures. Later in my study, this framework will be re-examined in the light of the findings from participating teachers, parents, examiners and students. It is my intention, to expand on the analysis presented in Table 3.2, to provide a more ‘perspectived’ account (Margolis, 2003, p.1) and in particular, to explore if the classification for instrumental education remains strong, or if changes in the signature pedagogy are occurring. Although I argue in this chapter that the current signature pedagogy of instrumental music is closely related to Bernstein’s ‘performance’ model, I will, at the conclusion of the study propose a framework for Key Signature Pedagogy and assessment which will align more closely with his ‘competence’ model (see Figure 8.2).

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

There is risk and truth to yourselves and the world before you (Heaney, 1996).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to address my key research questions, and presents the rationale for the paradigmatic underpinning of the research processes selected. My objective is to explain the interconnectedness between the theory outlined in previous chapters, the research methodology and the empirical work selected for my study. I take the viewpoint that empirical work can prove or enhance the theoretical-dialectic relationship (Mac an Ghaill, 2011); that is, the empirical can support or refute theoretical perspectives but, in addition, can provide a more ‘perspectived’, explanatory or descriptive account of theoretical concepts in practice. An overview of the research rationale, methodology and process from conception to completion is provided in Figure 4.1. This highlights the conceptual relationships and determinants which have underpinned my study.

4.1.1 Outline of research approach

Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) emphasise the centrality of the research questions in the research process, and argue that the research questions should focus not only on paradigmatic, but also on real-world considerations. They propose that the research questions drive the selection of the research methodology and processes (*ibid.*). The

key research questions for this study are, therefore, restated here as they are central to what follows in this chapter:

1. What is the signature pedagogy for instrumental music education in Ireland, and what does it look like in practice?
2. What is the role of assessment in shaping this pedagogy, and how is the graded examination system perceived by the various stakeholders?
3. How does this signature pedagogy coincide (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the different social actors (students, teachers, parents and examiners) engaged in this process?

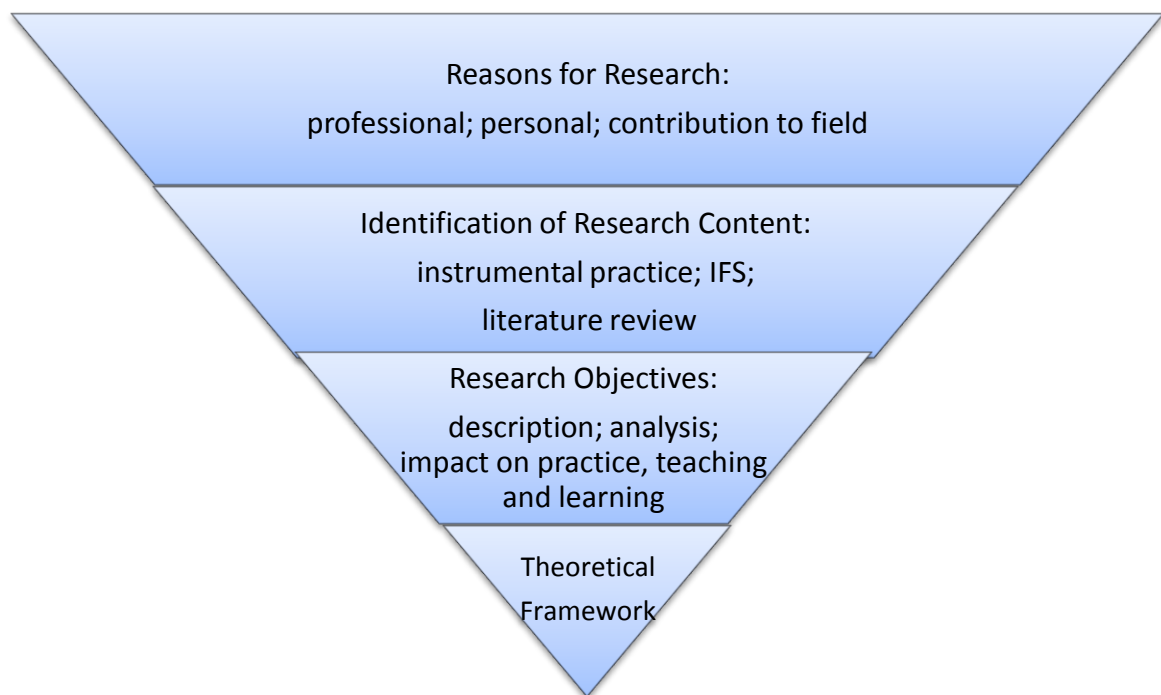
In addressing these research questions, I selected a ‘pragmatic’ paradigm which provides a ‘middle ground’ between extreme philosophical stances in research and offers the opportunity of employing ‘different, even conflicting theories and perspectives’ (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.74). This pragmatic paradigm, which facilitated the use of a mixed methods approach, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, will be further discussed later in the chapter. As an insider researcher within my own community of practice, it was necessary to consider how my positioning in the research process would impact on that process. A discussion on situating the self in research will be presented.

Although this is not strictly an ‘ethnographical’ study *per se*, there are ethnographic elements in the research design. I found myself particularly drawn to Smith’s (2002) concept of ‘institutional ethnography’, aspects of which will be employed to ‘look beyond the details’ of the phenomena under study (p.17). ‘Institutional ethnography’ is concerned with how apparently ordinary day to day activities of individuals are unwittingly or unknowingly impacted upon by often invisible, or distant, institutions (*ibid.*). Following on the arguments presented in

Chapter 3 relating to the institutional impact on instrumental education, I considered Smith's approach to be relevant to my study.

Punch (1998) stated that literature research can be used at the planning and analysis stages of research, as distinct from employing a 'grounded theory' approach where the ideas emerge primarily from the data (p.43). In planning this research, the theoretical frameworks underpinning the research questions and the extant literature relating to instrumental education, were taken into account. These led to some *a priori* concepts shaping the focus at the data collection and analysis stages.

An overview of the entire research process is provided in Figure 4.1 on the following page. This schema is adapted from one developed by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p.130). In their schema, the upper triangle represents what precedes the emergence of the research questions, and the lower triangle represents the research processes which emerge *from* the research questions. In this figure, I have expanded their original schema to represent the rationale and processes within this study, and to indicate the overall integration of theoretical concepts emerging at different stages of the process.



Research Questions

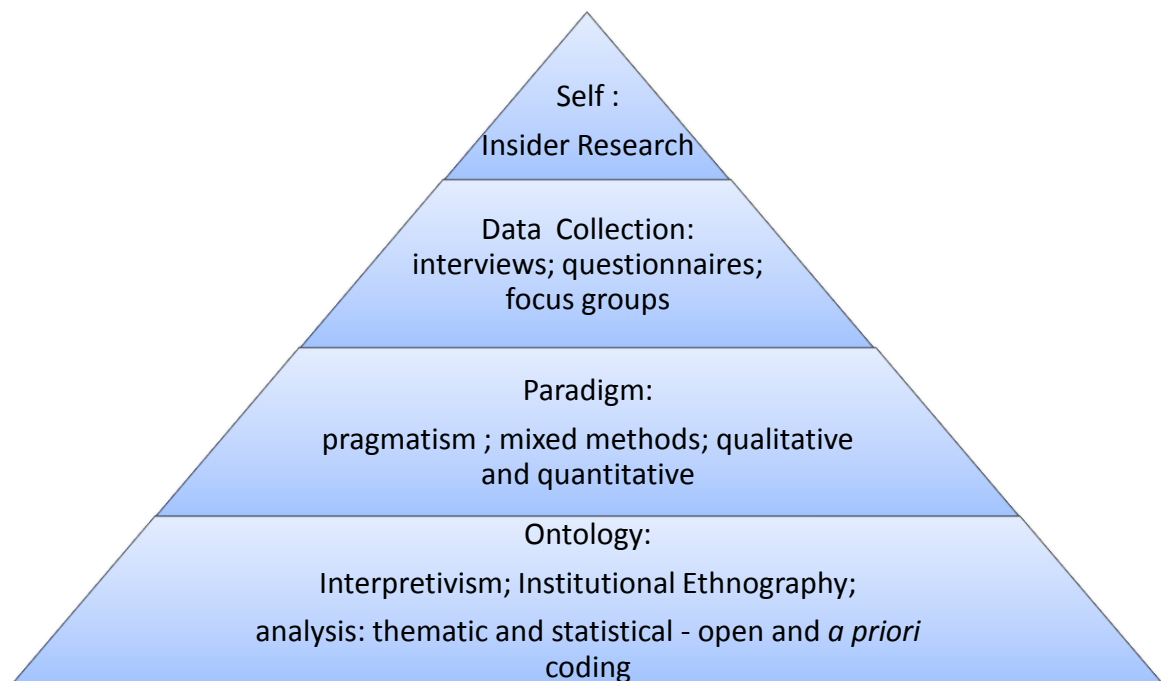


Figure 4.1: Overview of research process (adapted from Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.130)

4.2 Situating the Researcher

Boulton & Hammersley (2006) argue that findings can be shaped by the presence of the researcher, potentially leading to misleading conclusions. They term this ‘reactivity’ (p.256); i.e. the tendency for situational influence, where the presence of the researcher may lead the participant to say what they think the researcher wants to hear. Elliott (2011) advocates

a reflexive approach to research in which the role of the interviewer, relevant aspects of his or her identity and the detail of the interaction between researched and researcher are understood as constituting an important part of the research evidence (p.20).

In the following paragraphs, I will outline my own identity within the culture under research and discuss the possible implications of this position in the context of my research.

4.2.1 Positioning the self

Coffey (1999) makes the point that ethnographic research is more often conducted by ‘members of a culture’ than by ‘strangers’ (p.22). She adds that ‘the path between familiarity and strangeness; knowledge and ignorance; intimacy and distance is far from straightforward’ (*ibid.*). She believes that it is not possible, and rather naïve to consider, that one can remain completely detached during the research process, but argues that one can be, at the same time, ‘involved and distant’ (p.23).

In coming to this research, I was conscious of the fact that, in Ireland, the community of instrumental teachers is relatively small. As a senior member of this community (in terms of age and experience), the ‘degree of separation’ between myself and the participants would inevitably be narrow. As someone who held positions in a number of national organisations, it was likely that, even when the participants were not personally known to me, I had worked with their colleagues or friends.

Smith (2002) refers to the ‘positioning’ of members within a particular culture and to

relations that extend beyond the local and particular, connecting ... with others known and unknown in an impersonal organisation (p.17).

I was conscious therefore, in carrying out the interviews with teachers, that power relationships and preconceptions within the community of music educators in Ireland, might bring ‘situational influence’ to bear on the research process (Boulton & Hammersley, 2006). For example, different professional interests could come into play. The lack of resourcing for instrumental teaching has meant that different interest groups have emerged, which in turn has led to some tensions (Heneghan, 2001). These tensions are manifested in sectorial interests represented by the academic/professional, classroom/instrumental and public/private divides that have developed over many decades (*ibid.*). Professional loyalties to certain institutions, and practices associated with those institutions, are deeply ingrained and it was important to be sensitive to these.

A typology of reasons for conducting research is outlined by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009). These include *inter alia*: 1) personal reasons, 2) reasons of advancing knowledge and contributing to the profession 3) societal reasons and 4) professional reasons. Often motives cross a number of these factors (*ibid.*) and such was the case in my research. I viewed the research process as a discourse of ‘two intersecting dialogues’, as outlined by Smith (2002, p.20); one dialogue with the participants and the other with the prospective readers of this research (who are also likely to come from the same culture of practice). With regard to the first dialogue, I recognise that the participants are ‘expert practitioners of their everyday worlds; they know how they go about things’ (Smith, 2002, p.21). Although sharing certain professional understandings, their day to day world and how they perceive it, may differ

considerably from my own. It was essential therefore to attend to the voices of the participants, acknowledging that even within a particular culture of shared institutional experiences, there is room for ‘perspectived’ accounts (Margolis, 2003, p.1); that is, how everyday practices might be perceived or interpreted differently by different actors.

With regard to the second dialogue, it was my intention to discover or uncover relationships, perspectives and practices and

to map them so that people can begin to see how their own lives and work are hooked into the lives and work of others in relations of which most of us are not aware (Smith, 2002, p.18).

I sought through my research to develop explanations for the practices which are carried out in instrumental education. Although an insider, I take the view that not all populations are homogenous, so different perspectives are to be expected (Corbin-Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), and I wished to understand more about the complex phenomena which are present in instrumental education. In relation to offering a contribution to my profession, it is intended that this research will forefront instrumental education on the research agenda and contribute to the body of knowledge at a time when considerable change is taking place in music education in Ireland.

Coffey (1999) writes that ‘we go into the field and take on roles and identities as a way of *getting on* with the task in hand’ (p.24) but these roles may themselves need to be adapted and changed throughout the process. On a practical level, undertaking my research meant adopting appropriate field-roles. I was aware of the importance of ‘negotiating and crafting’ the interactions and engagements during the different interviews (Coffey, 1999, p.23). I believe that this negotiation and crafting was often a factor of ‘positioning’ within the culture, and in how the power relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee were perceived from the participant’s perspective. For example, one senior academic and research practitioner held firmly to the terms of

reference (i.e. the information sheet provided), coming highly prepared for the interview, with a clear indication that she did not wish to move off point. Another offered advice on my research techniques (based on his own research experience) and frequently redirected the dialogue away from the interview questions. Yet another indicated that she had been told to ‘cooperate fully’ with me (by the principal of the school through whom the interview had been arranged) and there was a sense that the views expressed might be that of the organisation rather than personal views. This occurred despite the fact that it was emphasised, in all my contacts to principals, that participation should be voluntary. The principal may, despite reassurances, have considered that an unwillingness to participate would reflect badly on the organisation. In this instance, I assured the participant that this was not the case, and that she was free to withdraw at any stage.

The field-roles I adopted therefore were pragmatic, often determined by the particular situation and interaction with the participant, with my primary objective being to place him or her at the centre of the process. The various roles required me, from time to time, to be collegial and conversational; an objective interviewer; a learner or novice researcher; or a research partner with shared professional goals. I took the view that I learned from each interview, and even where the topics and themes were similar, my thinking processes changed with opportunities to make connections, expand my own understanding, and triangulate previous data as I developed as a researcher.

4.3 Research Paradigm and Methodology

4.3.1 A pragmatic research paradigm

A problem for all researchers is the issue of where to situate their research in a paradigmatic sense. Historically there has been a complex debate in research, with two positions founded on the epistemologically opposing views of positivism and

constructivism paradigms (Corbin-Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In more recent times, a centrist position between these two extremes is emerging (*ibid.*), and I will look at these various positions here.

Positivism views the social world ‘as if it were a hard, external and objective reality’ (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2003, p.8); this approach is concerned with ‘discovering natural and universal laws regulating individual and social behaviour’ (p.7). From this perspective, social reality is regarded as fixed and external to individuals, ‘imposing itself on consciousness from without’ (*ibid.*). In the positivist paradigm, the researcher remains a detached, external observer, relying on scientific methods (usually quantitative) to provide an objective and measured account of the phenomena being studied.

A social constructivist or interpretivist approach takes the view that the social world is fluid, complex, and cannot be described in fixed terms. Social phenomena under investigation must be contextualised and viewed as part of a complex social whole, taking into account cultural, social and historical contexts (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). In this approach the researcher seeks to ‘understand situations through the eyes of the participants’ (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison., 2003, p.29). Furthermore it is recognised that the social world is constructed and can only be presented in terms of how it is experienced by an individual. The researcher’s perspective cannot be fully objective or value-free either and thus the social world is co-constructed between the participants and researcher (Teddle & Tashakkouri, 2009). Some researchers therefore employ qualitative methods to provide a more nuanced, descriptive account of the social worlds being explored.

Corbin-Dwyer & Buckle (2009) argue that there is a ‘space between’ the polar perspectives of positivism and constructivism where complexity and richness are valued

over any entrenched views. In my research, I was drawn to the centrist position of pragmatism which rejects binary choices and traditional dualisms, taking a view of 'knowledge as being both constructed and based on the reality of the world one experiences and lives in' (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.74). I selected an approach based on 'fitness for purpose' (Bell, 2010) to enable me to collect data that responded to my research questions. Margolis (2003) states that pragmatism is

open in principle to plural, partial, perspectival, provisional, even non-converging ways of understanding what may be judged valid in any and every sort of factual and normative regard (p.3).

Coming to this research with my own professional and personal views, I considered that a pragmatist epistemological perspective provided the 'space between' positivist and constructivist perspectives, that would allow different views to materialise. It would enable a range of perspectives to emerge in terms of different realities, diversity of practice and nuanced values, as opposed to seeking finite and definitive concepts of practice in the social and cultural space which I was investigating.

One particular concern which I have highlighted is the impact of the various institutions on instrumental education, in particular professional bodies which govern the sector. I wished to understand how these impacted on individuals' practices and, as such created different realities for teachers, examiners, students and their parents in different settings. The emerging account could, therefore, be considered ethnographic in style in that it explores the nature of a particular social phenomenon (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998) – instrumental education in this instance – and provides description, analysis and interpretation of a culture sharing group (Creswell, 2007). In doing so, I believe that the emerging account falls within a discourse called 'institutional ethnography' (Smith, 2002, p.17).

4.3.2 Institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography is associated with the work of the Canadian sociologist, Dorothy Smith, and grew from a feminist discourse, although it now also has wider application in other contexts. It focuses on how daily practices become institutionalised in rules and general relations (Smith, 2002). The main premise is that

the everyday/everynight of our contemporary living is organized by and coordinated with what people, mostly unknown and never to be known by us, are doing elsewhere and at different times ... Institutional ethnography's radical move as a sociology is that of pulling the organization of the trans- or extra-local ruling relations – bureaucracy, the varieties of text-mediated discourse, the state, the professions and so on – into the actual sites of people's living where we have to find them as local and temporally situated activities (Smith, 2002, p.19).

For example, Smith's work focuses on how a socially and historically mediated discourse on mothering impacts differently on the lives of mothers, as they come under different economic and social pressures (Smith, 2002, p.39).

In my study, I was interested in understanding how institutional factors can, for example, impact on teacher agency as teachers go about their daily professional lives. The accounts from participants indicated greater or lesser levels of awareness, and acceptance or rejection of, institutional factors governing instrumental education, and as such provide a rich canvas for exploring 'plural, partial, perspectived (*sic*), provisional, [and] non-converging ways of understanding' (Margolis, 2003, p.3) the phenomena under discussion.

4.3.3 Mixed methods methodology

Many authors present pragmatism as an appropriate philosophical paradigm for mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2011). In a mixed methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, with a view to drawing on the strengths and weaknesses of both (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and with the research questions driving the approach selected (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). When using mixed methods,

quantitative approaches can be employed, for example, for exploratory or confirmatory reasons, with qualitative methods being used to expand, elucidate or triangulate findings. In this way, mixed methods can be both inductive and deductive.

In my IFS, which preceded this research, quantitative methods were used to examine students' views on the graded examination system in instrumental learning. My IFS highlighted a number of issues: for example, that the repertoire played was largely from the Western art tradition, although this did not correspond with the students' expressed listening preferences (O'Sullivan, 2010). By using a follow-on focus group with students in this study, it was possible to explore these issues in more depth. Such an approach, where the strands occur chronologically with one strand being dependent on the previous, is termed a 'sequential mixed design' (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009, p.26).

A 'parallel mixed design', where the qualitative and quantitative elements occurred simultaneously, was employed for the remainder of my Research Based Thesis (RBT). One of the benefits of using quantitative methods is the possibility of reaching a larger population in a given timeframe. To get a broad sweep of the aspirations, expectations and levels of satisfaction of parents, I concluded that a questionnaire would be appropriate. The questionnaires distributed to parents included both quantitative and qualitative elements (see section 4.4.2 below).

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers and examiners (see section 4.4.3). This approach was selected to provide a descriptive account of the signature pedagogy of instrumental tuition, and the impact of assessment on that pedagogy. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the methods of data collection employed and the time-line involved.

Research Question	Quantitative	Qualitative	Description	Time-line
			Ethical Approval SSHL/10/11-32	June 14 th 2011
RQ1. What is the signature pedagogy for instrumental music education in Ireland, and what does it look like in practice?		Interviews with eleven teachers and examiners	Semi-structured interviews with eleven teacher practitioners, four of whom were examiners. Interviews took place in various locations, at the interviewee's convenience.	July to December 2011
RQ2. What is the role of assessment in shaping this pedagogy, and how is the graded examination system perceived by the various stakeholders?			Interviews dealt primarily with RQ1 and RQ2, but also aspects of RQ3 relating to teachers' views.	
RQ3. How does this signature pedagogy coincide (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the different social actors (students, teachers, parents and examiners) engaged in this process?	Pilot questionnaire		Distributed to 20 colleagues and parents, after which changes were made.	June 16 th 2011
	300 postal questionnaires to parents		Statements and rating questions presented with Likert scale for quantitative analysis.	Posted July 10 th 2011 – deadline for return August 30 th 2011
		Open questions in the questionnaire to parents	Open questions enabling parent respondents to qualify or elaborate on views.	
		Focus group with students	To expand on findings of IFS relating to students' views. For triangulation and increased depth of analysis and description of student experience.	June 10 th 2012

Table 4.1: Overview of data collection and time-line

4.4 Methods of Data Collection

4.4.1 Sampling strategies and access

I have already highlighted in section 4.2, some of the problems associated with being an insider researcher. These problems included sectorial interests, allegiances and alliances, which can at times impact on access for research purposes. In undertaking my research, it was necessary to be sensitive to these interests and I was conscious of this when requesting access. I strove to ensure that participants engaged willingly and did not feel any sense of coercion, because they knew me on a professional or personal level. It was essential to protect the integrity of my own organisation, and others, by not requesting access where perceived conflicts of interest might arise, placing other organisations in the position of having to refuse access. A further consideration arose from ethical obligations, directed by the Research Ethics Committee of King's College London, which required that prospective teacher participants not be approached directly by the researcher, but by the Principals of their schools.

With these considerations in mind, I applied a 'purposive convenience' approach to selecting participants. Purposive convenience refers to taking advantage of 'cases, events, or informants, which are close at hand' (Punch, 1998, p.193). I aimed to include a representational sample by selecting schools from different parts of the country. However, I selected schools or settings where I perceived (often through prior informal discussions with Principals or teachers) there was an openness or interest in exploring practices in instrumental education.

In the interests of maintaining continuity, the survey with parents took place at the same school where the students had participated in my IFS. The Management Board and Principal of this school agreed to facilitate the circulation of the questionnaire to

parents. To protect the personal data of their clients, their data base was not shared, and envelopes for the postal questionnaire were labelled in-house at the school.

The focus group with students was also selected from this school in line with the sequential mixed methods approach mentioned above. Following discussions with the Principal it was decided to initially target group classes. However, on a number of occasions, insufficient consent forms were returned to form a viable focus group. Ultimately, purposive convenience sampling came into play again, with the focus group being selected from students (with parental consent), who had indicated a willingness to participate.

4.4.2 Questionnaires to parents

Different reasons for using quantitative methods, such as exploratory or confirmatory objectives, have already been identified. Quantitative methods can also be used however, to explain phenomena (Muijs, 2010); in this research, for example, to identify factors which motivate parents to enrol their children in music lessons. Muijs (2010) points out that using questionnaires can be limited in terms of answering questions of causality or arriving at a 'deeper understanding of processes and contextual differences' (p.39). In this research, the questionnaires to parents included closed and open questions; the closed questions mainly involved responding to statements on a Likert scale and open questions provided an opportunity for parents to expand on their views (see Appendix 1). To avoid bias towards positive statements, Muijs (2010) suggests using some rating questions to distinguish between relative importance in statements, and this was also used in the questionnaire (in Question 2). The questionnaire was read by colleagues, and piloted with a small group of parents for readability, after which a number of amendments were made. The primary changes were to include a number of extra statements in the second section: for example 'I want to give them career options'.

In addition, there was some confusion in the second question of section 2 which required ranking instead of rating and the instructions were changed to be more explicit.

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed by post to parents, and 95 were returned, indicating a response rate of 31.6%. The response rate to postal questionnaires is generally quite low, often as low as 20% (Kelley *et al.*, 2003), so this response rate was considered reasonable. It is advised that in such methods, a large sample is used to ensure that the profile of respondents reflects the survey population, and that there is a sufficient data set for analysis (*ibid.*). The level of response in this case did enable analysis using SPSS. The parent respondents represented a broad range of student ages and instruments (although a majority were piano students, which reflected the profile of student at the school). In addition the parents had a broad range of musical experience, but it is difficult to ascertain other biases; for example, if the parents who responded were those with more interest or involvement in their children's music education.

4.4.3 Semi-structured interviews with teachers and examiners

Qualitative methods facilitate the study of complex social relations, where local, temporal and situational narratives were required (Flick, 2006). Because of the shared professional experience between the researcher and researched in my study, I considered that semi-structured interviews would best facilitate a 'deeper understanding of processes and contextual differences amongst professionals' (Muijs, 2010, p.39), and could provide some possible explanation for these differences. Elliott (2011) outlines contrasting naturalist and constructivist approaches to research interviews. Some consider these approaches to be mutually exclusive: the former being a 'realist' approach which collects detailed information from the respondents, while the latter can be analysed only in relation to the interaction of the interviewer and interviewee. As an insider, I considered that semi-structured interviews would provide the vehicle for

colleagues within the profession to present their views, with possible non-convergent ways of understanding the phenomena under discussion. Through utilising data from semi-structured interviews, it was intended that deductive methods could be applied to address RQ1, namely what the signature pedagogy of instrumental music in Ireland looks like in practice. Inductive methods could be used to address more complex issues of how and why certain practices developed, became pervasive and are maintained.

A sample set of questions was sent to all participants in advance of the interview for consideration (see Appendices 3 and 4). These included unstructured and structured questions. Flick (2006) recommends posing unstructured questions first, with increasingly structured questions later in the interview. An example of an unstructured question used with teachers and examiners is:

What do you consider to be the most important influences on your teaching practice or teaching style?

An example of a structured question is:

Can you outline a typical instrumental music exam/lesson – do you follow certain procedures?

Posing questions in this way enabled some comparison between teachers' expressed beliefs and aspirations, and what happened in practice. Most of the questions provided in advance to interviewees were unstructured and, frequently, structured questions emerged during the interviews for clarification purposes.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven practitioners (all instrumental teachers, four of whom were also examiners). (For profiles of the teacher/examiner participants, see Chapter 5, Table 5.1). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were forwarded to the participants for checking, some of whom responded, with few clarifications required. Situational interview notes were recorded immediately afterwards in a research diary.

4.4.4 Focus group with students

Focus groups can serve different purposes in research: as a piloting device to determine the validity of a survey being proposed; as a post-primary research tool to clarify results generated by other means; or as part of a multi-method approach (David & Sutton, 2004). For the purposes of my research, the focus group with students was used, as part of a sequential research approach, to triangulate and expand on findings generated in my IFS, which were related to the current research questions. The advantages of using a group approach is that it can save time and money, and ‘group discussions ... correspond to the way in which opinions are produced, expressed and exchanged in everyday life’ (Flick, 2006, p.191). Instrumental lessons are often a solitary activity with little opportunity to engage with other students, and a peer group perspective could provide a tool for considering and reconstructing individual opinions. Another advantage of using a focus group in this instance was that it enabled the selection of students from different age groups. In addition, it provided an opportunity to include students who had discontinued music lessons; the lack of representation of this group was seen as a possible disadvantage in my IFS, as students who had dropped out were unrepresented.

The more the group knows about the topic and is interested or motivated, the smaller the group needs to be – therefore six to seven people was considered sufficient in this instance (David & Sutton, 2004). Seven students, between the ages of 10 and 18, took part in the focus group, five of whom were active instrumental students, and two of whom had discontinued lessons. The participants represented a range of instruments and achievement levels. Some were known to each other, others were not.

A few short written questions were provided to the students at the outset as ‘stimulus material’ (David & Sutton, 2004, p.96) (see Appendix 17). These questions were designed to instigate student discussion, rather than having everything directed by

the interviewer (Flick, 2006), and to provide ‘settle in’ time to break the ice amongst the participants (David & Sutton, 2004, p.96). The responses from these questions provided triggers for discussion, as will be outlined in Chapter 7.

Parental consent was sought and obtained (see Appendix 18), except from one 18 year old student, who signed her own consent form. Students were provided with an overview of the research at the outset, assured that the group session was a ‘safe place’ where their views would be confidential, and some ‘rules’ for the conducting of the session were outlined (David & Sutton, 2004).

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Quantitative data from the parents’ questionnaires

The data from the questionnaires to parents were transferred to SPSS, which is the most commonly used statistical data-analysis software package used in educational research (Muijs, 2010). Initially individual variables were examined to provide descriptive information or trends in the information. At this point it was possible to present in graph form the views held by parents, enabling some descriptive analysis.

The data were treated as categorical and a test for independence, using Pearson’s chi-squared test, was conducted to compare the views of different sets of parents (for example parents who were themselves instrumentalists or non-instrumentalists). Results were cross-tabulated and the *p*-value reported. The findings are reported in Chapter 7, and for most groups, no significant difference of opinions was found. One notable exception was a difference in attitude, between parents of pianists and non-pianists, towards the importance of examinations, which is discussed in section 7.3.5.

Responses to open questions in the parents’ questionnaires were analysed using colour coding, enabling a numerical count of various elements (see Appendix 9 for a sample). This was possible because the data were generally limited to short statements.

4.5.2 Qualitative data

The data collection methods employed were selected with a view to best addressing the research questions (Muijs, 2010, p.6), as has already been outlined. Qualitative data were produced from the transcripts of the interviews with teachers and examiners, from the open questions in the questionnaires from parents, and from the transcripts of the focus group with students. The greatest bulk of the qualitative material came from the interviews with teachers and examiners. This material related to all three research questions. Qualitative material from other sources (the parents and students) related mainly to the RQ3, to see for example, if teachers', parents' and students' perspectives and aspirations coincided or not.

Creswell states that 'data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom-built, revised and "choreographed"' (Creswell, 2007, p.150). The process of analysis that I employed related closely to the 'data analysis spiral' as outlined by Creswell (2007, p.151), which he describes as entering with data, moving in analytical circles, and exiting with an account or narrative. In Figure 4.2, I outline my approach based on an adaptation of the process tabulated by Creswell (2007, p.151). In this schema, I have incorporated a template for phenomenological coding (Creswell, 2007, p.170) as the central activity in the process, as this best represents the ongoing nature of the analysis process.

In approaching the data, I first transcribed the recordings of the interviews and focus group, numbering each response sequentially and marking it with the respondents' initial (using pseudonyms for anonymity), so that it would be easily retrieved (e.g. Ray14 signified Raymond's fourteenth response – see Appendix 5 for a sample of an original transcript). I then managed the data by dividing the responses into three main categories corresponding to the three research questions relating to signature pedagogy, assessment and aspirations/beliefs. These categories were further subdivided

into different classifications based on the research questions (see Appendices 6 and 7 for samples of coding). Some text segments fitted more than one major category and were included in all relevant areas. Having managed the data in this way, I then began a line by line analysis using predetermined codes arising from the literature (*a priori*), and *in vivo* and emergent codes arising from the data (see section 4.5.2.1 below). Further classification of the codes led to the emergence of a number of primary themes. Examples of the initial line by line analysis are provided in Appendices 6 and 7. Appendix 8 presents an example of further refinement, where data segments were linked to the codes and classification. This was done by reading through all the previously coded sections, and highlighting or underlining ‘significant statements’, ‘meaning units’ and ‘textural descriptions’ (Creswell, 2007, p.170). Thus the primary codes began to emerge.

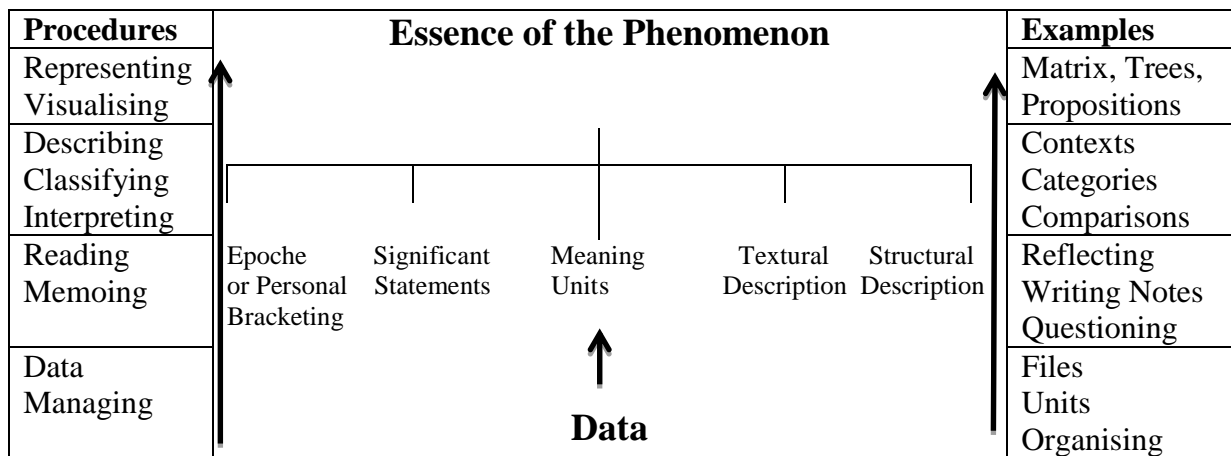


Figure 4.2: Overview of analysis process (based on Creswell, 2007, pp. 151 and 170)

4.5.2.1 Coding

Codes can be drawn from different sources: *a priori* codes are pre-existing from within the field or literature, *in vivo* codes come directly from the voices of the participants, and emergent codes drawn up by the researcher based on the findings (Creswell, 2007).

In developing the initial codes during the analysis of the data, I drew on all of these,

using both ‘prefigured’ and ‘emergent’ categories (p.152). By taking the phenomenological approach described above, it was possible to go beyond the prefigured themes founded on the existing literature. I aimed to allow the voices of the participants to be central in the emerging account, in what Creswell (2007) terms ‘epoche bracketing’ (p.59) (see also Figure 4.2). In this approach, researchers ‘set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh approach towards the phenomenon under examination’ (*ibid.*). This approach was facilitated during the analysis process by enabling clusters of statements and meanings to evolve and emerge into broader descriptions of what was experienced by participants, and how it was experienced by them (Creswell, 2007, p.170). These meanings and descriptions sometimes fitted with prefigured themes, but additional themes also emerged. In Table 4.2, I present a sample of how *a priori*, *in vivo* and emergent codes, which arose from the participants’ accounts, were grouped into classifications, leading ultimately to primary themes.

Themes	Signature Pedagogy (AP)	Assessment (AP)	Performance Model (AP)	Hegemony (EM)	Teacher Effect (EM)
Classification	1. Surface Structure (AP) 2. Deep Structure (AP) 3. Implicit Structure (AP)	4. Assessment in Practice (EM) 5. Impact on Pedagogy (EM) 6. Performativity (EM) 7. High Stakes (EM)	8. Strong Classification (AP) 9. Deficit Model (IV) 10. Professionalisation (EM)	11. Institutional Factors (EM) 12. Power (EM) 13. Cultural Rituals (AP) 14. Hierarchy of Genres (EM)	15. Teacher Agency (IV) 16. Teacher Education (EM) 17. Teacher Characteristics (EM) 18. Teacher Beliefs (EM) 19. Musical Agency – Student Choice (IV) 20. Communication with Stakeholders (EM)
Text/Codes	One-to-one dyad (AP) Master-apprentice (AP) Formalised music education (IV) Part of the understanding (IV) Specialised futures (AP) Conventional learner profile (IV) Performance opportunities, group work (EM) Orchestra (EM) Group – individual (EM) Technique focused (EM) Sight-reading (text focused) (IV) Componential as opposed to holistic (AP) Amalgam of skills (AP) We don't do jazz (IV) Transferable – or lack of (EM) Piano a solitary instrument (IV) Would rather develop a 'social repertoire' of happy pieces! (IV) Over emphasis on classical music (IV) Ensemble was the greatest motivation (IV) Discipline (IV)	Grading and stratification of learning (AP) Time punctuating sequence and rate of learning (AP) External regulation (EM) Assessment for learning (AP) Assessment of learning (AP) Evaluation of teacher practices (AP) Teacher professionalism (AP) Professional preparation and certification (EM) Examination procedures (EM) High stakes (EM) Foot on the ladder (IV) Pyramid (IV) Product and performance rather than transferrable (EM) Politicised, data-driven, accountability-focused (AP) Tremendous pressures to achieve around grade examinations (IV) Whole year's learning is geared towards examinations (IV)	Legitimation of the process (AP) Specialised futures (AP) Potential repair service (AP) Bad habits (IV) Inadequacies despite years of training (IV) Undoing the damage (IV) Legitimation through graded examinations (AP) Pedagogical Recontextualising Field (AP) External regulation (EM)	Buying into the myth (IV) Old worldly (IV) Legitimised traditions and ways of communicating (AP) Predominance of Western art music (IV) Predominantly Eurocentric (IV) Inevitable goal of becoming a classical musician (IV) Reification and legitimation (AP) External regulation (EM) Powerful examination institutions (EM) All going in one direction, it's going towards classical (IV) Moved the deckchairs (IV) Received wisdom based on teachers' experience (IV) I did piano 30 years ago and the method of teaching has not changed (IV)	Conventional learner profile (IV) Poor piano teaching (IV) Wonderful, so encouraging (IV) Old style teaching (IV) Bulldozer (IV) Lessons not very merry (IV) Fun (IV) Skills – aural, cognitive, technical, musicianship, creative, evaluative, self-regulatory (AP) Independence and autonomy (EM) Group teaching - mixed abilities, profit, self-regulating (IV) Preparation for life (IV) Teaching standards (IV) Dirty little secret in Irish education (IV) Parental pressure (IV) More communication between teacher and students' parents (IV) Intensity of relationship. Teachers can get very cross (IV) Include the parent in a lesson (IV)

Table 4.2: Sample of second and third stage analysis

IV = *In vivo* codes; AP = *A priori* codes; EM = emergent code

4.6 Ethical Issues

Prior to commencing my research, ethical approval was sought from the Research Ethics Committee of King's College London. This rigorous process involved a 'high-risk' application, and every aspect of the research process had to be defended. Following an initial application, a number of refinements and clarifications were sought, and approval (SSHL/10/11-32) was received on 14th June 2011 (see Appendix 12). The ethical guidelines followed were those of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011).

Although guidelines for research with children have recently been published in Ireland by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA, 2012), no such document was available at the time of commencement of this research. Due to jurisdictional differences between the UK and Ireland, a number of legal clarifications were sought (discussed below in section 4.6.2), and the advice received corresponds retrospectively with new DCYA (2012) guidelines.

4.6.1 Access

Access issues have already been mentioned above, and a common-sense approach to this was employed at all times to ensure that colleagues or organisations involved would not be compromised in any way. Teacher/examiner participants were selected and recruited via the Principals in the schools involved, with the exception of a few who volunteered to participate. This latter situation usually followed from informal encounters at conferences. In line with the research proposal, four music schools in different parts of the country were approached. These were mainly within the private sector, although one did receive some State support. The participants frequently followed 'portfolio' careers whereby they taught in different settings (e.g. employed and self-employed) and different roles (e.g. teacher, performer and examiner), a

consequence of which was broader representation across different educational settings. In the case where a teacher taught in more than one school, the second school was not approached for permission, as it was considered that teachers could apply their own professional judgement once they had consented to participate in my research.

4.6.2 Informed consent

For consent to be valid, it has to be informed and voluntary (Shaw *et al.*, 2011). To achieve this, participants must receive adequate information on the nature of the research,

understand the process ... including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported (BERA, 2011, p.5).

All participants received information sheets outlining these details prior to engaging in my research. Adult interviewees were given the option of receiving the transcript and feed-back. The questionnaires were anonymous and sent by post to further ensure confidentiality and voluntary consent.

4.6.3 Working with children

Although following the BERA guidelines, it was also necessary to ensure that the procedures concurred with regulations and best practice in Ireland. In the absence of specific guidelines pertaining to research with children, I consulted a legal expert on child protection to check for jurisdictional differences between the UK and Ireland. The advice received concurs with recently published guidelines by the DCYA (2012), namely that

young people over the age of 16 can exercise rights in relation to medical and dental decisions concerning themselves, but the general law in [Ireland] is that parental rights remain intact until the child reaches 18 years of age (p.2).

Consequently, parental/guardian consent was sought for all participants under the age of 18 years.

My research aims were presented in a child-friendly manner, and because the children involved had all taken instrumental lessons, this did not pose any difficulties. Care was taken that young participants consented voluntarily. This was achieved by speaking with all the parents, in advance, in person or by phone. It was emphasised that this research was about hearing the children's voices with a view to attempting to improve the experience of learning to play an instrument.

'Garda vetting', which involves a background check by the *gardaí* (police) in Ireland for suitability for working with children, was in place before the research commenced.

Garda vetting is conducted in respect of personnel working in a full-time, part-time, and voluntary or student placement capacity in a position in a registered organisation, through which they have unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults (An Garda Síochána, 2012).

4.6.4 Data protection

The ethics application indicated how data management and storage would fully comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 including the Data Protection Principles. This involved outlining how hard and soft copies would be stored, and at what address. Participants were assured of confidentiality and this was achieved by utilising pseudonyms for all interviewees. In addition, care was taken, as far as possible, that local organisations would not be identifiable. The data gathered will only be used for the purposes of this research, and will not be viewed by anyone other than the researcher.

4.6.5 Trustworthiness

Techniques for increased trustworthiness in qualitative research are outlined by a number of authors (Flick, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), some of which were applied in this research to ensure increased validity, objectivity and reliability. Flick (2006, p.371) states that 'the question of validity can be summarized

as a question of whether the researchers see what they think they see'. Validity must be sought during the production of data, and in the presentation of phenomena and inferences from the data (*ibid.*). In terms of internal validity (whether the reconstructions are credible to the participants), the strategies employed were member checks, triangulation techniques, and negative case analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.296). Member checks were carried out by sending the transcripts of the interviews for comment to the interviewees. Triangulation was possible by comparing and contrasting themes across the different populations involved (teachers, parents, students). Negative case analysis was, for example, possible in the consideration of Darren's situation (a student who had discontinued with instrumental tuition), and Raymond, a teacher who had commenced lessons as an adult.

In addition, 'procedural validity' and reliability was maintained by 'listening as much as possible' in the field, producing exact transcripts, producing detailed field notes and writing from an early stage in the process (Flick, 2006, p.374). External validity (or transferability) can be increased with 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, p.3) and by 'providing enough data for readers to make their own inferences and follow those of the researcher' (Flick, 2006, p.374). To counter insider research bias as far as possible, I have provided 'thick description' with a view to bringing alternative perspectives to the fore.

To increase objectivity and validity in drawing inferences and conclusions, I engaged in further member checks with the participants. It was not possible to revisit all the sites of the research, so I selected two teacher respondents with whom to discuss my findings. Both had been engaged in research in the field, and I considered that they would have 'problematised' many related issues within the profession, and consequently could provide a critical, constructive evaluation of my findings.

At all stages during the process of analysis, I engaged in a process of ‘confirmability auditing’ which involved checking inferences and conclusions against the data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.296). In addition I engaged in a reflexive process of ‘accounting’ by linking the behaviours, rituals and meanings against the ‘larger cultural, historical and organizational contexts’ within which we were operating, by relating back the ideas emerging to the theoretical underpinning of the research outlined at earlier stages (Flick, 2006, p.374)

4.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology that underpinned my research. The pragmatic paradigm which underpinned the research methodology and design was discussed. I took a centrist position, between the polar epistemological perspectives of positivism and constructivism, to present different perspectives. The mixed methods approach employed for data collection was outlined. This primarily involved the use of a parallel mixed design, but with some sequential mixed design being employed to follow from my IFS. Access issues were discussed and the sensitivities of being an ‘insider’ researcher, with possible perceived conflicts of interest, were outlined. Although four schools from around the country were approached for teachers’ interviews, there was an element of ‘purposive convenience sampling’ in that I was aware that these schools would be open to such research. The methods of data analysis were outlined: SPSS was used for quantitative data, and the processes for analysing and coding qualitative data were described. Ethical issues were discussed, including issues of consent, working with children, and ensuring cross-jurisdictional compliance with legislation in the UK and Ireland. Finally issues relating to trustworthiness, and the processes undertaken to increase reliability, validity and objectivity were outlined.

CHAPTER 5

Key Signature Pedagogy

Signature pedagogies are important precisely because they are pervasive. They implicitly define what counts as knowledge in the field and how things become known. They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, or discarded. They define the function of expertise in a field, the locus of authority, and the privileges of rank and standing ... [T]hese pedagogies even determine the architectural design of educational institutions, which in turn serves to perpetuate these approaches (Shulman, 2005, p.54).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on RQ1; what is the signature pedagogy for instrumental music in Ireland, and what does it look like in practice? It will draw on data realised from the interviews with teachers and examiners. I have outlined the professional focus of instrumental education in Chapters 2 and 3, and argued that pedagogical practices are sedimented down in a particular culture and praxis of music education which is directed, to a large extent, by professional bodies. Teachers in the field will have substantive experience of how professional musicians develop, and are likely to have experienced this formalised music pedagogy in their own education.

The approach in this chapter is in keeping with the pragmatic research epistemology outlined in Chapter 4. It is not the intention to ‘fit’ the signature pedagogy emerging from the data into any particular theoretical framework. However, it is intended to use the data to explore the theoretical perspectives previously considered

(Mac an Ghaill, 2011), and to provide ‘thick description’ of what the signature pedagogy of instrumental music looks like in practice (Geertz, 1973, p.3). The data will be examined utilising aspects of Bernstein and Shulman’s pedagogical models, but will also take account of additional emergent and *in vivo* themes which surfaced from the data.

5.1.1. The teachers’ and examiners’ profiles

Table 5.1 provides an overview of the teachers’ profiles: their specialisations, level of education, duration of experience, and locations of practice. A total of eleven instrumental teachers were interviewed; four of these also worked as examiners for examination boards. Three teachers were in full-time State employment as instrumental teachers and/or College (third level) teachers. The remaining eight teachers taught in a range of settings, mainly as self-employed teachers, working privately from their homes, or for independent schools or schemes, but often with some part-time State employment. Most of the teachers specialised in one instrument, but some taught two or more.

The profiles of the teachers crossed a range of ages, experience, educational levels, instruments and teaching settings. The teachers were selected using purposive convenience sampling as outlined in Chapter 4.

Teacher/ Examiner*	Principal Instrument	Secondary Instruments	Approximate Years of Experience	Level of Education	Locations of Practice
Declan	Violin		30	Primary degree in Music (university); Currently enrolled on PhD in Education	State peripatetic instrumental scheme (provincial)
Rita	Flute	Voice, violin, piano	8	Masters in Performance (flute); Currently enrolled on EdD	Independent ⁹ music school with peripatetic scheme (urban and rural)
Lena*	Piano	Accordion, violin	35	Associate Diploma in Piano Teaching; non-cognate Masters	Convent school with instrumental scheme and privately in own home (rural); Examiner for IRB1
Katia	Piano		3	Post-graduate Diploma in Music Education	Private teacher in own home and students' homes (urban)
Raymond	Guitar		12	Masters in Musicology	Independent music school (urban) and semi-state ¹⁰ music scheme (rural)
Marcus	Voice	Piano	12	Masters in Musicology	Independent music school and privately in own home (urban)
Orla*	Piano		25	Masters in Performance (piano); Currently enrolled on PhD in Musicology.	State/municipal music conservatoire (urban); Examiner for IRB2
Lara	Voice	Clarinet	10	Masters in Performance (voice)	Independent music school (rural) and community based music scheme (urban)
Betty	Theory	Piano	15	Grade 8 piano; non-cognate primary degree	Independent music school (rural)
Saoirse*	Flute	Piano	10	Primary degree in Music (university)	Semi-state music school (provincial) and independent after-school programme (urban); Examiner for IRB2
Ingrid*	Piano	Theory	25	PhD in Musicology.	State/municipal music school (urban); College lecturer; Examiner for UKB1.

Table 5.1: Teachers' and examiners' profiles

*Denotes examiners

IRB – Irish based examination board

UKB – UK based examination board

⁹ Independent schools are privately funded, mainly through student fees.

¹⁰ Semi-state schemes are partially subsidised by funds from the VECs (now ETBs), with student fees accounting for the balance

5.2 The Signature Pedagogy of Instrumental Music

The signature pedagogy of instrumental education will be examined in the light of Shulman's three structures: namely the *surface*, *deep*, and *implicit structures*. The *surface structure* deals with the 'concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning' (Shulman, 2005, p.54), and, in my study, will take into account the routine, quotidian practices of instrumental teaching and learning. The *deep structure* is referred to as 'a set of assumptions about how best to impart ... knowledge and know-how' (Shulman, 2005, p.55). This aspect of pedagogy involves developing the discrete processes of thinking and acting inherent in a particular profession (*ibid.*). I will therefore interpret the *deep structure* as the space where students participate in simulated or real musical contexts in preparation for becoming practising musicians. Shulman's *implicit structure* refers to the 'moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions' (2005, p.55); he refers to this as the 'hidden curriculum' (*ibid.*). I take this to refer to the value system that underlies the profession of instrumental education.

5.2.1 The surface structure

Many of the specific acts of teaching and learning in instrumental education are familiar to those who have partaken in lessons. The evidence emerging from my study suggests that practices are 'pervasive and routine' (Shulman, 2005, p.56). The descriptions articulated by the teachers of *surface structure* activities at instrumental lessons support the findings of previous studies: i.e. teaching and learning is carried out in one-to-one settings; music elements are presented componentially rather than holistically; and music is treated as a textual rather than a sounding phenomenon (Salaman, 1994; Kennell, 2002; Rostvall, 2003; Gaunt, 2006; Daniel, 2006).

5.2.1.1 *The one-to-one dyad*

One of the most consistent findings was the prevalence of the individual lesson as the context for the teachers' own learning, a practice which was then continued in their teaching. This extended also to the two non-Irish participants, Katia and Lara, who had undertaken their initial music education in the Czech Republic and Poland respectively. Most lessons were once weekly for 30 minutes, especially at the earlier stages. The short lesson duration was largely a consequence of financial cost, because providing individual tuition is expensive.

Teachers often reported struggling to get everything done in such a short time, as Katia stated here:

there are just loads [of scales] and there are so many other things I want to do in the lesson and I can't – it's kind of a struggle [Katia/int:99].

Because the lessons were short, the onus was often placed on the students to make progress by practising independently in the interim periods. In the following excerpt Raymond outlined what he says to students who have not done enough practice:

I say "well it's only a half hour lesson, this is just catching up, seeing how you are going, trying to correct things, moving on forward, trying to stop you making too many mistakes within the week" [Raymond/int:61].

The appropriateness of this approach for beginners or young students is questionable, because without on-going support, gaps in their knowledge may impede their progress and cause frustration.

Despite the shortcomings of the individual lesson, most of the teachers accepted this teaching context as the norm, although a few (Declan, Lena and Rita) did carry out some group teaching as an alternative. Declan stated:

[my teaching] was initially all [one-to-one] until a few years ago... but I've started taking beginners in groups as much as I can [Declan/int:66]

There were differing views on the efficacy of group teaching. The most cited reason for not providing group lessons was that students have mixed abilities and progress at different rates. Raymond stated:

there will always be a slight difference in the speed of progress. I don't want to hold people back [Raymond/int:30].

He also expressed the concern that the increased practice of group teaching was motivated by financial rather than educational factors. He stated that

it is very effective ... in terms of profit margin, but I prefer not to do it at all [Raymond/int:32]

Rita found that parents did not view group teaching to be best practice and usually opted for individual lessons for their children when given a choice:

people think with one-to-one you've got more individual [attention] – it's more expensive therefore it has to be better! They don't think that they could be learning from their friends or motivated by being in the group [Rita/int:52].

Two teachers who had initiated group lessons for practical reasons came to consider it a highly effective teaching context. Lena took keyboard lessons in groups because '*lots of children could not afford the luxury of one-to-one*'. She found the group lessons successful and '*the [students] were much better sight-readers than a lot of the [individual] piano students*'. She wanted to implement group-teaching in the school where she practised but the principal would not allow it, being of the view that learning keyboard (as opposed to piano) was an inferior approach, and '*they would all want to do it*'. This indicates a concern about popularising music education; rather than viewing the fact that many students would be motivated to learn keyboard as positive, the principal was concerned with maintaining the prevailing ethos of piano lessons within the school.

After many years of teaching individual lessons, Declan switched to taking beginners in groups '*for practical reasons*'. He now continues group teaching up to Grade 5 '*which is quite sophisticated*'. He found that there are many benefits: '*they*

enjoy each other's company and they look forward to it much more than the individuals'. He spoke about the intensity of the one-to-one situation for both teachers and students. In the following passage he outlines the advantages of group over individual lessons:

[The individual lesson can] get too intense; ... and the children ... teenagers, young people, come in on their best behaviour, trying to please. Sometimes ... we're expecting too much; whereas in a group, it's almost self-regulated ... they don't feel that they're rabbits in the headlights. I think that's what's so intense [for students] in one-to-one. It's intense for the teacher as well and that's where the stress lies. You actually work harder in the group situation but it's very pleasant hard work and the day flies ... I'd love to convert my whole teaching practice to groups [Declan/int:78-81].

Kennell (2002, p.245) states that 'group instruction is not a teaching strategy, it is a teaching context'. Group teaching requires alternative teaching strategies and a pedagogical approach which incorporates differentiation, peer and social learning. Many of the teachers in this study had not considered group teaching, viewing the approach negatively and considering it to be less effective. This may be a consequence of only experiencing individual lessons in their own professional preparation as teachers or performers. If group teaching is to be effective, it is essential that it become an integral part of initial music teacher preparation.

5.2.1.2 *An amalgam of skills*

Kennell (2002, p.251) states that unlike other teaching contexts, the 'prelesson production of elaborate teaching plans' is not generally found in the instrumental teaching context. He states that the instrumental lesson 'consists of a succession of subcomponents' (*ibid.*) and compares it to a 'crucible' into which selected ingredients of 'various cultural artefacts' are placed to bring about change in the student's behaviour or performance (*ibid.*).

In my study, teachers placed greater emphasis on different skills, and these are discussed below in order of the importance placed upon them by the teachers.

Technique was to the fore, followed by sight-reading, theory and aural development. Appendix 19 shows an example of a visual *Wordle* representation of the vocabulary used in Orla's interview (www.wordle.net). Although this cannot be taken as scientific, it will be noted that certain skills such as scales and sight-reading feature prominently while improvisation and composing are not represented at all.

5.2.1.3 *Technique and scales*

Technical development mainly involved working on scales. Most teachers considered technique to be very important, and it featured strongly in their teaching. Orla was influenced by her own advanced studies which had taken place under a Russian pianist at a German conservatoire. She stated:

I come from the Russian school ... [where] you have to do all the scales' exams first and you're not allowed to do the pieces unless your scales are up to scratch [Orla/int:17].

Orla's own approach to teaching technique was very systematic and highlights the focus on scales:

earlier in the year I get them to address the scales for their exams ... during the summer, that's their homework ... once we've gone through all the scales I give them a timetable ... Then for the rest of the year I'll call out a few and see then which ones are not working so well [Orla/int:18].

Saoirse, on the other hand, questioned the efficacy of scales for developing technique on flute. Her view was that important technical aspects of flute playing, in particular tone development, were not addressed by playing scales. Yet she found, because of the examination syllabus, there is a significant focus on scales:

the technical side of things gets a bit forgotten because of working on the scales, the melodic minor of this or that ... and forgetting to practise the normal tone or other slower technical stuff [Saoirse/int:109].

In this statement, Saoirse implies that the cognitive aspect of remembering all the scales impinges on technical development, which is concerned with refining motor skills. In

the following passage Declan posits that students do not enjoy practising scales because they are not musical, and consequently not appealing to play.

When I said “Scales are so easy ... just go home and play them”, one child said “Real easy, yea, but they’re not catchy” ... What an answer, they’re not catchy, they’re not musical. And the technical studies can be musical, they’re melodic, or they’ve got some technical element that the kids think is cool, and they love them [Declan/int:51-54].

The data indicated that, regardless of the instrument, there was a strong focus on technical development in the form of playing scales, even where scales were not considered the most appropriate medium for developing technique. Learning scales took up a lot of time at lessons and students often resisted practising them because they were not musical and not enjoyable to play.

5.2.1.4 Sight-reading

In a Swedish study which observed the interactions between teachers and students at 11 instrumental lessons, Rostvall (2003) found

the teachers addressed music as a sight-reading exercise. Music was generally broken down into separate notes, or chords, as read from the sheet. The teachers talked about the printed score as if it were a complete representation, providing all information regarding all aspects of musical performance (p.219).

My study concurs with this description, and teaching new repertoire was often approached as a sight-reading exercise. Frequently, this was a deliberate strategy. Lara pointed out that because they come to formal music education later than other instrumentalists, ‘*singers are often behind in musicianship*’. Consequently she focused on sight-reading to bridge this gap, stating:

I treat my singers as if they are learning any other instrument ... I choose a song and put it on the [music] stand. I do it totally through reading ... They get their music and have to work through it to sing it [Lara/int:31].

Notwithstanding this, sight-reading skills were reported as being generally poor. The examiners identified this as a particularly weak area in examinations. Lena stated: ‘*The worst area is sight-reading, followed by scales, then aural tests, theory and repertoire*’.

Saoirse found that in the examinations *‘the pieces would be great ... [but] sight-reading would be like pulling teeth almost!’*

Instrumental students who played in orchestras were reported to be better sight-readers, indicating, as might be expected, that such participation encourages skill development in this area. Saoirse stated:

People coming in [to examinations] on flutes, trumpets and violins, are playing in an orchestra or ... wind band so they’re getting sight reading skills ... plus it’s only one line so it’s a little bit easier [than piano] [Saoirse/int:55].

Teaching or learning sight-reading as a disjointed activity might not be the most effective approach. Playing in an ensemble demands keeping up with others, learning anticipation, audiating the written text, and recognising the key patterns or harmonic/melodic essentials of the piece.

5.2.1.5 *Theory of music*

Learning music theory was frequently reported as a separate activity, taking place outside of the instrumental lesson. Some music schools had musicianship classes, but these were not universal. The interviewees indicated that the musicianship classes they experienced were often theoretical and notation-based, with a focus on the theory examinations offered by the examination boards. Declan’s account of learning theory was *‘old style of theory filling in the boxes’*. Betty taught theory classes which involved:

a little bit of aural training but mostly the actual theory as in the graded theory exams [Betty/int:13].

Where students were taking private individual lessons, theory or musicianship classes were not provided and this provided a challenge. Katia stated:

They don’t have music lessons at school and they don’t have any kind of musicianship class so I have to do that as well during those 30 minutes [Katia/int:67].

The approach to teaching the theory of music was therefore detached from music as a sounding phenomenon, and presented as ‘symbolic objects’ (Rostvall, 2003, p.221).

5.2.1.6 *Aural training and playing by ear*

Although many teachers emphasised its importance, there was little evidence of aural development, other than that required for examination purposes. In the following excerpt Orla considered the importance of being able to play by ear for performance:

It's very important that you teach how to play aurally and I don't see that happening ... if you were good at playing by ear, ok so you have a slip, but you know by ear what to do [Orla/int:123-125]

Katia felt that there was pressure on her as a teacher to focus on sight-reading skills as opposed to aural work because of parental attitudes. She stated:

some parents ... don't see playing by ear as [important] as reading music. It's good playing by ear especially [if] they don't have their music ... they're stuck and they can't play anything ... some [parents] don't see that [Katia/int:107].

The approach to aural development was frequently motivated by requirements for examinations, and this may also influence parents' views. Ingrid, who prepares students for advanced music theory examinations stated that '*there's no aural part [in the theory examination] ... they have to work on papers*'. At Betty's school, they brought the students together before the examination to specifically go through the aural elements. All of this points to a componential and examination oriented approach to aural development.

5.2.1.7 *The surface structure – key points*

From the evidence presented, a *surface structure* of instrumental teaching emerges with clearly defined concrete, operational acts which are pervasive across settings and practices. The one-to-one, or master-apprentice dyad, was prevalent. Certain skills were valued over others, in particular technical studies in the form of scales, sight-reading, and theory. The approach to teaching was often componential, with separate theory or musicianship classes. Technical aspects were developed as separate activities divorced from the repertoire. The approach to teaching repertoire was as a written rather than sounding phenomenon. Skills such as improvisation, composing, developing memory

techniques and playing by ear did not feature strongly. Evaluative skills, such as listening for understanding, and comparing musics were not explicitly mentioned.

5.2.2 The deep structure

When examining the data, clear mutual patterns in the teachers' experiences and views emerged, which might be taken as a 'set of assumptions' within the profession (Shulman, 2005, p.55). I will take the view that the *deep structure* represents the opportunities provided for students to act as musicians in simulated or real performance situations, and consequently develop their sense of musical identity.

5.2.2.1 Ensemble music-making

Most of the teachers in my study had engaged in some type of ensemble music-making outside of their individual lessons. Occasionally this was formalised, and was generally elective, but precariously dependent on localised opportunities. Those who had participated in ensembles indicated that the experience was highly motivating and consequently significant for their own development as musicians.

For non-pianists, the ensemble opportunities were more obvious and structured.

At Declan's music school:

when you were able to get a fiddle under your chin and use the fingers and bow, you were put into the orchestra [Declan/int:8].

He also played traditional Irish music informally with '*a group of my friends ... when we were about 15*'. Rita joined a '*little county orchestra – it was great*'. Lena, who played piano, violin, and accordion stated '*I had the best of both worlds ... I ended up in the [Irish] Youth Orchestra when I was 17*', and she participated in the *Fleadh Cheoil* (national Irish traditional music competitions). Saoirse played flute in the local youth orchestra and '*liked the whole team-work whereas piano was much more solo*'. The possibility of being part of a big performance was an inspiration for Rita, whose family was not hugely interested in music:

I remember thinking 'I have to be in that orchestra' ... it was that that nudged me to practise; because ... there was no music in my family at all, so I wasn't getting inspiration to practise from there [Rita/int:10].

The pianists did not have the same opportunities for ensemble playing. Some availed of ensemble opportunities not involving piano playing. Singing in shows and musical theatre provided motivation for Betty, and this was carried through for her own children: *'I see with my own children, things like that [shows and concerts] have actually kept their interest in music going'*. Although Marcus' first experience of instrumental tuition was piano lessons, he considered that most of his *'early music education was through performance in singing ... joining a good choir when I was 12'*. From the following excerpt it is evident that Marcus was far more motivated by his participation in a choir than by his piano lessons:

as a child you get to perform [piano] at a concert once a year and that's all you do, whereas I was singing twice every Sunday [Marcus/int:34].

The different experience of pianists and non-pianists in relation to group participation in music was something which was frequently referred to, and is an issue which I will return to in section 5.2.2.3 below.

5.2.2.2 *Concerts*

Concerts were a feature of most teachers' own learning experience and of their teaching practices. The primary objective of these was to develop performance skills. As already noted, non-pianists had opportunities to play in various orchestras and ensembles. Efforts were made, however, to ensure that pianists and guitarists had performance opportunities. At Orla's institution, there was a 'piano club' where students got to perform monthly. At one of the schools where Raymond taught, they aimed for about four concerts per year, and concerts took precedence over examinations. He stated:

the goal is to play in concerts ... It's a great philosophy because I notice that the kids have never built up any fear of performing ... they'll come off smiling ...

they're not destroyed by a bad performance, and why should they be?
[Raymond/int:54].

He viewed the concert, not only as a motivator but as a reward, providing an occasion for students to celebrate their progress, and to hear other students play. Katia found that concerts provided an important opportunity for communicating with parents. As a young teacher, she felt under pressure from time to time to capitulate to parents' views on how and what should be taught at lessons, but the concert provided a platform for parents to observe progress, besides the examination report.

Although performance opportunities were provided for students, there was no evidence of any type of performance preparation. Even Orla, who performed recitals throughout the world, reported not having any psychological preparation, other than getting over nerves by repeatedly performing. It might also be surmised that non-pianists would have opportunities to perform in groups, but pianists would have to perform solo in the main, which could be more stressful. This is yet another example of how pianists and non-pianists might experience instrumental tuition differently, and this difference will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.3 *Pianists facing the wall*

Although the *surface structure* experienced by instrumental students was similar, I argue that the *deep structure* experienced by pianists is different to that experienced by other instrumentalists, with possible consequences for motivation and attrition. Seven of the teacher participants commenced their own formal music learning with piano lessons. Of these, four later took a second or third instrument, which often superseded piano in terms of preference or priority. Lena and Saoirse found learning piano unfulfilling because of poor teaching; others found the solitary aspect of playing piano difficult. Lena never once heard her piano teacher play (consistent with findings in Rostvall, 2003) and she '*tried to get out of playing the piano several times*'. On the other hand

she was inspired by the accordion and violin teachers, and motivated by the group learning contexts experienced by playing these instruments.

The solitariness of playing the piano was a recurring theme. Declan reflected on the experiences of his own five children as follows:

They all did piano at some stage but none of them stayed with it. It just wasn't as exciting as playing the violin, the clarinet, or the electric guitar, wow! ... young children come home to practise and they have to face the wall! The solitariness of it! ... the violinist, the flautist, the clarinetist ... can walk from room to room, bring it down the road, join the local wind band or youth orchestra or trad group ... there's so much more that the poor piano student doesn't have [Declan/int:154 – 159].

This excerpt paints a grim picture of the solitariness of the piano student practising 'facing the wall', and, by contrast, the joy and fun to be had by playing with others. This may be an aspect that many parents and students do not consider before selecting to play the piano – an issue which will be discussed further in Chapter 7 when examining the views of parents.

Four of the participants reported that their siblings discontinued piano lessons, and some expressed the view that they might not have continued with music had they not participated in something other than piano lessons. Lena stated that '*my sister played [piano] for eight years and she couldn't play a note after it*'. She also reflected '*If I had not gone to that accordion class what would have happened, would I just have pulled out?*' The broader social objectives, and consequences of playing different instruments, should therefore be considered at the selection stage by parents and students.

5.2.2.4 *The deep structure – key points*

This section described the contextual opportunities provided to enable students develop or act as real musicians, outside of their instrumental lessons. For non-pianists, ensemble opportunities were usually provided through orchestra or ensembles. There

was little evidence of group or ensemble opportunities for pianists. Most students were afforded the opportunity to perform in end of term concerts. There was little evidence of any psychological preparation for performance, other than participation in the events themselves.

The *deep structure* participation of the teachers, during their own learning, varied in specifics, but it would seem that involvement at this level was critical in their development as musicians. I would argue that those who participate at this level, with opportunities to transfer *surface structure* skills to real-life music situations (in groups, ensembles and concerts in the broadest sense) are more likely to succeed and continue with their music education. Because participation in ensemble is not accredited by the examination system, there is a danger that aspects of the *deep structure* are viewed as ‘additional’ activities and consequently their ‘value’ underestimated by the different actors (teachers, as well as students and parents). This is particularly the case for pianists, for whom participation in *deep structure* activities (i.e. the opportunity to act as musicians in real world scenarios) are fewer.

5.2.3 The implicit structure

In this study three areas of ‘hidden curriculum’ emerged providing a basis for exploring attitudes, values and dispositions. The first of these related to an underlying notion that ‘Western classical music, very broadly defined, is the only really valuable style of music’ (Green, 2003, p.8). Although individual teachers may not have subscribed to this idea, often they were constricted within their institutions to teaching primarily classical music. The second related to ‘the notion of the virtuoso musician as the paradigm of musical achievement’ (Spruce, 2002, p.18). Related to this, was the concept of the professionalisation of the instrumental student from the earliest stages of learning, and the particular implications this has for teaching and learning.

5.2.3.1 *We don't have jazz*

According to Anderson (2010, p.v) 'contemporary music is already multicultural, it is our music education that remains predominantly Eurocentric'. As well as an obvious proliferation in popular music genres, traditional Irish music has, in recent decades, become more mainstream and popular within Irish society (not least because of the Riverdance phenomenon and the international success of other traditional Irish groups). Downey (2009) points to the similarities between performance in jazz music and traditional Irish music, in terms of aural, improvisation and creative skills, with performers producing individualised and innovative performances of existing repertoire. Yet, Salaman (1994) points out that many of these skills are 'undervalued in the Western tradition' and its related pedagogy (p.220).

Despite the increased popularity of Irish traditional music, only one teacher in my study (Declan) incorporated it into his teaching. His rationale for doing so was to motivate students, rather than particularly for the development of skills associated with the tradition itself. He still believed that the focus for learning instrumental repertoire remained:

classical – absolutely; [although] in my case they're also playing trad and having great fun because they're in groups – that's just another added value [Declan/int:115].

In this instance therefore, traditional music is providing a supplementary role (motivation) for the development of the classical musician. Although involved in playing traditional Irish music himself, Declan felt restricted by the prescribed canon available for teaching:

the repertoire for learning the violin is only there in classical music – it's a classical canon for structuring the learning. The material isn't there in other genres ... I don't think it exists [Declan/int:147-151].

Gaunt (2006) highlighted that teachers are often isolated within their schools or conservatoires, having little engagement with the 'wider context of student learning in

the college' (p.155). In some instances teachers may not even be aware of what is going on in the wider school community. Orla, who taught at a large municipal school of music seemed unsure if there was jazz at her school, as it did not feature as part of the examination syllabus:

we don't have jazz. I think there's a jazz teacher around alright but ... no, it's not part of the exam ... [the repertoire] is quite classical ... it's like the Russian School (Orla/int:151-155).

There was evidence of some recent changes in the examination syllabi, but generally curriculum changes remained 'cosmetic' (Salaman, 1994, p.221). Lena and Katia welcomed the introduction of some jazz and blues pieces to the syllabus. However, the approach to teaching these remained product-oriented, similar to the approach of teaching classical pieces. Declan stated that although some of the 'composed repertoire [is] ... slightly jazzy, it's all going in the one direction – towards classical'.

5.2.3.2 *It's only a wedding band for heaven's sake!*

Some teachers expressed reservations about the dominance of classical music in instrumental learning. Rita describes her own experience of singing lessons as follows:

I'd go in ... with musical theatre and fun things and he just said "No we have to do this [classical piece]" (groan)... I'd bring in "Quando sono solo sogno..." (sings and laughs) and he was "Rita, that's not grade 1!" [Later] I sang for [a teacher in London], straight away she knows a country voice ... I did 5 years of classical singing; ok I loved singing but if I'd done pop singing, it would have just transformed things for me so much earlier [Rita/int:77-82].

Although Rita was a relatively recent graduate, this account points to the lack of options and professional advice that were available to her in Ireland. Her subsequent experience of singing with a jazz band changed her perspective on teaching. She felt that, despite all her training, her 'inadequacies' were shown up when confronted with informal musicians.

The band really opened my eyes ... I'd done all my training, I couldn't have done any more practice; [the] guys could improvise anything ... calling out all these crazy chords and I didn't have a clue ... I'd done piano, I'd done flute, I'd done violin, I'd all this experience yet I couldn't go out and play music without having all this notation in front of me ... and it's only a wedding band for heaven's sake! [Rita/int:72-75].

The action of Rita's singing teacher points to

legitimised traditions and ways of communicating [that] constrain what is possible to play, do or say in the music lesson (Rostvall, 2003, p.3).

The emerging accounts from the instrumental teachers in this study reveal a continued focus on classical music and developing the associated skills, regardless of students' cultural interests and objectives.

5.2.3.3 *Early professionalisation and specialised futures*

From the earliest stages of learning, it seems that the instrumental student is being professionalised. The focus on professionalisation has certain consequences for teaching and learning, and may even explain the recurring manifestation of the 'tyrant teacher' (Creech, 2006, p.374).

Self-regulatory skills include managing the process of learning and practice, enhancing concentration and motivation, and preparing for performance (Hallam and Creech, 2010). The discipline developed through learning to play a musical instrument was mentioned by a number of the teachers. Lena states that:

The discipline that's involved in learning an instrument is often not recognised ... students who achieve well in music are often high achievers in other areas ... the discipline they learn really stands to them [Lena/int:123].

Marcus' account confirms the discipline required to act as a professional as a boy soprano from a very young age:

I was singing twice every Sunday ... I was acting as a professional musician because there were all these professional expectations of me, to turn up, and be heard, and sing the right notes and be part of a performance [Marcus/int:35].

The development of self-regulatory skills was considered important, not only for musical reasons, but was justified as providing essential life skills. Declan described his early experience of lessons with a ‘tough’ teacher, but thought that ‘*maybe ‘twas a good education in itself*’. Orla felt that the discipline developed through music examinations prepared students for other important examinations in their lives, stating:

[it is necessary] *to get across to kids how important music is in their lives - if they can take the discipline - it toughens them up for exams. Leaving Cert is nothing compared to piano exams ... because you’re having to perform physically and mentally ... it’s everything, emotional control of your nerves. It toughens them up for life. It’s good discipline, keeps them out of trouble and off computers* [Orla/int:50].

It is likely that the pressure for professional standards impacts on the interactions in the music lesson, a factor which will be discussed below.

5.2.3.4 *Specialised futures and the deficit model*

Bernstein’s PRF model (1996) emphasises a focus on product rather than process in teaching and learning outcomes. This approach gives rise ‘to a potential repair service ... and distribution of blame’ (p.51) or deficit model. Valentia (1997) states that

the deficit thinking model posits that the student who fails in school, does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest, it is alleged, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn or immoral behaviour (p.2).

The evidence from my study suggests that many of the participants experienced aspects of this deficit approach, with blame for failure often centred on the student. This could begin quite early in the student’s musical life. Declan describes his early lessons as follows:

the lessons were tough going, old style teacher, highly motivated but like a bulldozer! Female ... shouted a lot [Declan/int:26-27].

There was a strong focus on skill specialisation and the teacher’s approach inferred that any deficit lay with the student:

she was pushing for technical things, sound production, pushing you. This all sounds very merry now, but it wasn't ... because the whole way up I was never good enough, and ... there was this push all the time for something beyond yourself [Declan/int:28].

The 'deficit model' was also evident at the more advanced stages of learning. The approach experienced by Marcus, Orla, and Saoirse at third level represents a master-apprentice relationship. Marcus found his experience of voice lessons at a music college unsatisfactory:

My lessons were quite pressured and this intensity was not helpful. The pressure came from the teacher ... we both had the idea that if something went wrong it was because I wasn't working hard enough ... In that period I learnt plenty but my ability to sing actually declined! [Marcus/int:14-21].

Saoirse had recently returned to flute lessons with a view to enhancing her professional performance opportunities. The approach of her teacher resembled that of the 'repair service' outlined by Bernstein (1996, p.51), with a distribution of blame being ascribed not only to the student, but to previous teachers:

He noticed cracks in my technique that he wanted to fix. He literally stripped everything down, to learn proper tone, proper breathing, everything from scratch without ever looking at a piece; we spent three months solidly on technique ... something I hadn't been taught properly. It was frustrating, I wanted to move on but of course you have to go back [to improve] [Saoirse/int:35].

Hallam (2006) argues that student personality can determine the way teacher behaviours are perceived. Orla described herself as '*the kind of student who was prepared to adapt*'. She and her Russian teacher did not speak a common language but she described their communications as follows:

I got the message very quickly with few words, you had no choice. He was pretty intolerant [Orla/int:8].

However, not all students were open to this approach:

There were some who went to [the Russian teacher] and did not want to adapt – they wanted to give part of themselves and it would not work. You couldn't study with him if you were going to be like that [Orla/int:10].

The experiences of Saoirse and Orla indicate that as students, they had to divest of, and strip back, previously acquired habits or learning, as directed by the master musician. There was little room for their personal inputs.

The ‘deficit’ model experienced in their learning was sometimes carried through to the participants’ own teaching practice. Orla was prescriptive in relation to structuring her students’ learning, describing their summer homework schedule as follows:

I don’t give them pieces because I find when they come back after the holidays they’ve got all these bad habits and I’m undoing the damage [Orla/int:18].

In their striving for excellence, Orla and Saoirse chose to subjugate their own views, put up with frustration and take on board deficits identified by the master musician in the pursuit of excellence. While these may be commendable traits for those electing to pursue a professional path, they should not be expected of all general music students.

5.2.3.5 *The implicit structure – key points*

The ‘moral dimensions’ of Key Signature Pedagogy are integral to the *implicit structure*, but impact on all aspects of teaching and learning. The *surface* and *deep structures* were mediated by the fact that the implicit goal for the student was a specialist future. There was an understanding that instrumental tuition was ‘*all headed in the same direction*’, towards the development of the classical musician. The dominant repertoire was Western art music and the skills developed were to meet the requirements of this tradition. In line with the concept of the ‘ideal musician’ who encompasses innate ‘talent and creativity, together with facets of personality’ (Creech, A., Papageorgi, I. & Welch, G. 2010, p.1), certain personal qualities were encouraged. These included self-regulation and discipline through commitment to daily practice and routines, in ever-increasing amounts as the student’s skills develops, and an ability to be

adaptable and even acquiescent to the master musician. It was implicit that achievement was an artefact of student application and ability rather than teaching methods. The ‘tyrant teacher’ (Creech, 2006, p.374) was viewed as instilling the required discipline and such approaches were often tolerated in the pursuit of artistic outcomes. Inculcating discipline and self-regulatory skills was justified and defended as imparting important transferable life skills, quite apart from musical benefits.

5.3 Conclusions and Implications

From what has been discussed in this chapter, a number of key themes emerge that have implications for what signature pedagogy looks like in practice (RQ1). The values and morals of the *implicit structure* dominate the discourse, and impact on the *surface* and *deep structures*. The *surface structure* involves routine practices experienced by all instrumental students, focusing on the performance of a prescribed canon and the development of a particular set of skills. The *deep structure* is experienced differently by the actors, depending, for example, on the instrument or the available opportunities. I argued that participation at *deep structure* level may impact on self-concept as a musician and consequently on success and attrition. In my concluding Chapter, I will make a case that there is a disconnect between the *surface structure* and the *deep structure*, and present a case for consolidating the *deep structure* within the organisation and institutions of instrumental teaching and learning.

There are implications in my findings for initial teacher education in instrumental music. The data discussed would indicate that there has been little intergenerational change in pedagogical approaches. The evidence points to strong classification (in repertoire and genre as well as pedagogic practices) with the practices being governed both implicitly and explicitly within the PRF (Bernstein, 1996). The embedded nature of these practices is inherent in the ‘reification’, ‘legitimation’ and

reproduction of the processes (Green, 2003, p.5), as evidenced by the views of teachers. The teachers in this study, although highly skilled – often notable performers or composers – tended to ‘resort to type’ when teaching. This reflects Mill’s (2007) statement that

it never occurred to me to structure the lessons other than in much the same way I recalled being taught violin (p.140).

Such outcomes may be a consequence of the participants’ teacher preparation or lack thereof. The fact that professionals can enter the teaching profession from a performance background has implications for teacher effectiveness as it is often assumed that, for instrumental music, unlike classroom teaching, performance skills supersede teaching qualifications.

In general, practices in instrumental education still seem to be ‘pervasive and routine, cutting across topics and courses, programs and institutions’ (Shulman, 2005, p.56). The tradition appears to have been strengthened by a strong belief in a revered tradition, which is self-perpetuating through the apparent willing collusion (hegemony) of teachers, parents, and students, a theme I will return to in the concluding chapter. The prevailing institutions which are responsible for the professionalisation of instrumental teaching and learning have had an obvious impact in the field, and none more so than in the area of assessment. The following chapter will therefore, examine assessment practices in instrumental education, in particular the graded examination system, and investigate how they impact on the Key Signature Pedagogy outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

The Impact of Assessment on Key Signature Pedagogy

I am standing in an air-conditioned waiting area of an expensive hotel in Kuala Lumpur ... My surroundings are meticulously Western in a city and climate unyieldingly tropical. I am seven years old. It is my first piano exam ... There he is. At a desk near the piano ... My piano teacher finds out in advance the gender of the examiner, so that we, her students, can practise the greeting until it is smooth on our young Malaysian tongues. The examiner is all-powerful. Not only can he administer a failing grade to you, thus wasting the previous year's work, time and money; he can do so at a whim, because nobody else witnesses the examination, held behind closed doors in his hotel room (Kok, 2006, p.89).

6.1 Introduction

Although this account above relates to an ABRSM examination in Malaysia, aspects of the experience will be familiar to those who have undertaken graded instrumental examinations in different parts of the world. The issues raised in the extract are those that will be discussed in this chapter, namely: meticulous preparation of a very prescriptive examination syllabus; high stakes examinations; performativity; the all-powerful examiner; cultural values and hegemony. These points relate to RQ2, namely:

What is the role of assessment in shaping this pedagogy, and how is the graded examination system perceived by the various stakeholders?

The chapter will conclude with a discussion on how the assessment system (graded examinations) impacts on the Key Signature Pedagogy outlined in the previous chapter. A summary of the findings of chapters 5 and 6 is presented in Table 6.1. This table

indicates the links between assessment and Key Signature Pedagogy, and relates the findings to Shulman and Bernstein's theoretical frameworks. Further discussion on how the stakeholders perceive the examination system will be explored in Chapter 7.

6.2 Signature Assessment

6.2.1 A pervasive system

We have a version of the Associated Board, just the same as Royal Irish Academy is another version of it, Cork School of Music is another version of it [Declan/int:179].

Two nationwide examination boards, the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) and the Leinster School of Music & Drama (LSMD), operate in Ireland, both having been established over one hundred years ago. These Boards provide examination syllabi and services to teachers at their main centres in Dublin, and at regional level through 'Local Centres'. Annually, the RIAM examines approximately 42,000 students (RIAM, 2013), and the LSMD 15,000 students, in speech and drama, and music (LSMD, 2010).

Teachers in Ireland also use UK examination boards. In the literature relating to the graded music examination system, the ABRSM is referred to most widely and is taken as the generic representation of the examination boards (Salaman, 1994; Fautley, 2010). Other examination boards are often benchmarked against this universal standard as indicated in Declan's comments above. In my study, the private teachers and independent music schools employed external examination boards. Some larger music colleges provided their own examination system, (each of which was structured along the lines of the examination boards). Four of the participants in my study were examiners for external boards – three worked for Irish boards and one for a UK board.

6.2.2 The examination process

Despite the teachers', the lecturers', or the examiners' best intentions, they are appraising, judging ... it's completely different to an audience [Raymond/int:68].

The examination procedures described by the examiners followed very similar patterns across the different examination boards. They all involved solo examinations and Saoirse described the encounter with the students as follows:

First we ask if they want to do scales or pieces and most choose scales; then the three pieces in whatever order they want. I generally move on to the theory while they are looking at their music; then the ear tests; and the last thing is always the sight reading, because if they're not happy with the sight reading at least they don't have to stay looking at me for longer than they have to!
[Saoirse/int:64-65]

Differences between the Boards were minor; the ABRSM had no theory test in the practical examination because it was examined through separate written examinations; and at one of the municipal schools there were no aural tests because students attended separate musicianship classes where this capacity was assessed.

6.3 Rationale for Examinations

In my country, they ask you what you can play, not what grade you are
[Katia/research diary; 02/11/2010].

This succinct statement highlights the loaded significance that the grades carry, and suggests that the primary objective of the examinations might at times be overlooked. It is not the grade that is important but the musical achievement of the student, yet the focus, in Ireland, tends to be on the grade. This section will look at the teachers' views on the graded examinations. In general the teachers and examiners in my study considered the examinations to be very important for instrumental teaching and learning. Their reasons included providing feed-back on teaching and learning, motivation for the students, and for developing self-regulation skills and discipline.

6.3.1 Improving teaching and learning – the feedback dilemma

Examiners are told not to examine as a teacher, not to write as a teacher, but as an examiner [Orla/int:82].

The graded examinations are summative and criterion referenced, assessing a very particular set of skills which are laid out in incremental stages (usually eight grades),

and outlined in syllabi constructed by professional examination boards. One of the primary functions of assessment in music education is to improve music learning and teaching (Brophy, 2008, Fautley, 2010). The idea that ‘formative and summative assessment are so different in their purpose that they should be kept apart’ is now refuted (Black *et al.*, 2002, p.15). Summative examinations can be an important and integral part of improving the teaching and learning process, and feedback can be used for evaluative purposes.

Ingrid found that the examinations ‘*give vital feedback you might not always be able to give yourself.*’ However, some examiners indicated that the framework for feedback was restricted. The examiners were given clear instructions on how to formulate written feed-back. Saoirse said:

We’re there to assess, we’re not supposed to say technical stuff ... we wouldn’t really know on a trumpet or whatever, so we just assess what we hear [Saoirse/int:56].

This view was reiterated by Orla, who highlights the possible impact of negative feedback on the teacher:

You have to be very careful ... you shouldn’t ever write something that’s going to have a negative impact on a teacher. You must couch the language to some extent to make it positive ... [the Board] helps you a lot with that [Orla/int:82 – 87].

The training received in this regard was outlined by Saoirse:

We were trained, even if the [candidates] are absolutely rubbish, to try and be as kind as possible and not discourage them [Saoirse/int:120 – 121].

It would seem that the opportunity for feedback was limited in terms of improving teaching and learning. The examination boards were careful that the teacher was not reflected badly, either as a result of poor preparation or poor student performance. Given the high stakes for teachers, it would be undesirable for their practice to suffer as

a result of student performance. However it is equally undesirable that students might suffer because poor teaching goes unrecognised.

Assessment is also widely used as a feedback mechanism for systemic evaluation. This includes evaluating the ‘effectiveness of educational interventions’ (Fautley, 2010, p.61), and of specific educational programmes. Other functions are to improve teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brophy, 2008; Fautley, 2010), and providing statistical data which can aid political advocacy and agency for change (Brophy, 2008; Fautley, 2010). In my study there was little evidence of diagnostic evaluation for these general objectives. The feedback was one-way, i.e. directed at the student, through the teacher. Because of the summative nature and timing of the examinations, feedback is likely to arrive during summer holidays, and the impact on teaching and learning may have abated by the time the new term begins.

6.3.2 Motivation

It motivates them, they get their result and it encourages them to go on to the next grade and so on [Saoirse/int:91].

Assessment practices can promote self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-regulation, goal orientation, interest, effort, and a sense of self as a learner (Black *et al.*, 2002; Boekarts & Corno, 2005). The motivational aspect of the graded examinations was highlighted by students in my IFS, who indicated strongly that examinations improve their playing and gave them a sense of achievement (O’Sullivan, 2010). Similarly most of the teachers interviewed for this study indicated that the examinations were critical for motivation. Goal orientation was a key issue and several of the teachers claimed that the students who choose not to do examinations quickly get bored or demotivated:

They must have something to aim for ... children often say “I want to take a year off exams this year”, and we’ll just do fun pieces; and usually by Christmas they’re bored and chomping at the bit to get back and have something to aim for [Betty/int:65].

Black & Wiliam (2012) state that the validity of testing can be skewed by ‘construct irrelevance’ (p.263); i.e. aspects (such as stress) that are unrelated to the subject matter or the students’ knowledge or ability. Some teachers were of the view that the motivation provided by examinations was transient, and felt that the stress of examinations might impact on the students’ performance and results. Katia stated:

sometimes it’s just doing an exam for an exam. It motivates them a little and when they have the certificate on the wall, they’re delighted ... but at the same time it’s pretty stressful. [Katia/int:14-15].

Many studies have found that examinations motivate students to practise (Hallam, 2006); for example, practice of scales and sight-reading increases considerably coming up to the examinations, although there is little evidence of an increase in practising repertoire (Davidson & Scutt, 1999). But Declan queried, ‘*are we asking the right questions?*’ The extent to which assessment is structured to validly assess the concept which it sets out to assess, is referred to as ‘construct representation’ (Black & Wiliam, 2012, p.244). If, for example, flute students are focusing almost exclusively on scales, which according to Saoirse are not the only appropriate form of technical development, perhaps the assessment is directing learners away from other constructive technical activities. In such an instance, the testing of technique on the flute might be less valid, due to construct under-representation (*ibid.*).

6.3.3 Extra-musical benefits of examinations

It could be the work ethic, the patience, the discipline of practice, and all of that [Ingrid/int:98].

Many teachers argued that the examinations were important for developing general life skills, unrelated to music. According to Lena ‘*the discipline of learning music is underestimated and rarely mentioned*’. Other teachers highlighted self-concept and self-esteem. Betty stated ‘[The examinations] *give them a sense of achievement, especially if they do well.*’

A ‘benefit’ of the graded examinations, already outlined in Orla’s comments in the previous chapter, was the idea of ‘*toughening them up for life*’ and preparing students for taking other examinations. A related, positive by-product of the graded examinations was the opportunity to develop general performance skills. Betty outlined the confidence that her son has gained from playing music:

For college presentations, he’s so used to performing there was actually no problem; getting up and giving a presentation was just second nature [Betty/int:45].

Marcus raised a point which was not mentioned by others, stating that some students do examinations because ‘*they want to achieve something*’, and have their hard work recognised.

Usually if they have other avenues to express themselves ... [the examinations are not as important]. I find that the people who want to do examinations most are those who work hard, not necessarily the best; but they have this work ethic [Marcus/int:89]

This observation by Marcus implied that some students had greater opportunities to derive intrinsic motivation from playing music, and consequently did not need examinations as much as others. For those who did not have alternative performance outlets, but had a strong work ethic, examinations provided a means of marking their achievement. Thus the examination process authenticated their self-concept and self-esteem as musicians.

6.4 High Stakes

6.4.1 Accountability

Assessment is partly for justifying the money that’s spent in publicly funded music schemes [Declan/int:176].

In schemes funded by the State, there has to be accountability for the costly mode of delivery of one-to-one tuition. Financial accountability is, however, just one area which the examinations must satisfy. It has already been stated that teachers use the examination system as a form of ‘quality control’ for their own practices (O’Neill,

1996). Because parents pay for the lessons, teachers are often directly accountable to them, without the mediating filter of a school or organisation. The examination results inhere the professionalism of the teacher from the parents' perspective (Bernstein, 1996). In other educational contexts, a learner's performance might be viewed in the light of general progress in other subjects; however the graded music examination is a 'stand-alone' event, without any other reference point. Students can also be held to account when they are required to achieve high grades to maintain their places in publicly funded schemes. Finally, the examiners were not immune from the pressure which the high stakes generated, as it was, at times, difficult to reconcile the interests of the various parties, and remain true to their own standards.

6.4.2 Examinations as evidence of teacher professionalism

Private teachers probably have to veer towards what parents want and are vulnerable to the market-place [Declan/int:191]

Because he worked for a State scheme, arguably Declan did not feel this 'market-place' pressure, but recognised that others might not be so lucky. Katia, who was self-employed, was in a different position and felt strong pressure to impress parents:

Parents want to see the result in the examination so I have to do what's required. Unfortunately, with parents it reflects my ability to teach [Katia/int:105-107].

She contemplated why some parents were so examination focused:

they don't play an instrument themselves so they don't know what it's all about; they see the examination result, and that's the only deciding factor for good or bad [Katia/int:111].

In the absence of other benchmarks for parents to evaluate progress, the examinations assume great importance because they provide justification for the investment of time, effort and money.

6.4.3 Specialised futures

If you don't get 85% at Grade 5 then you're out. They have to be tough at Grade 5 because then the syllabus gets really difficult [Orla/int:48].

The stakes are high also for students. Students in some schools had to achieve high marks in examinations to maintain their places on the instrumental schemes. This was more evident in the State music schools, where tuition was subsidised and consequently there was a pressure on places, with the demand for places exceeding supply. The approach in these schools was that of a conservatoire, with a focus on achieving excellence, leading to a professional future. Declan said '*I know that in [names four State music schools] you have to achieve a particular mark or else you're out*'. Orla confirmed that, in her institution, students were required to get 85% in Grade 5, '*because they won't be able to manage Grade 6. 80% is usually the cut-off point for the earlier grades*'. Declan calls this '*sifting*' and although he works for a State scheme, this practice did not apply in his organisation:

We don't do that, there's no threshold. We've students who have done Grade 4 or 5, they're not going to go much further than that, but they don't give up. They stay with the fiddle band or the one-to-one lesson and they get a portfolio full of nice tunes. They're still playing ... and having fun; and they go to the Saturday orchestra which is what they love [Declan/int:184 – 185].

From the accounts presented by Orla and Declan, it appears that the purpose of assessment at their organisations was very different. At Orla's institution, there was an emphasis on specialised futures to which only the best students could aspire (Bernstein, 1996). The situation described by Orla would suit a minority of students, and those not achieving the grade might have a sense of failure as musicians. Declan described a different approach, involving '*fiddle band*' and '*orchestra*', and the acquisition of '*a portfolio full of nice tunes*'. His organisation facilitated learners to continue a social engagement with music, without the pressure of examinations, and in a manner best suited to the individual student.

6.4.4 The all-powerful examiner

It's very subjective [with] one examiner ... the kid gets a certificate for the rest of their lives ... One person decides and it's on paper and that's it! [Katia/int:113].

As outlined in Kok's (2006) extract at the outset of the chapter, a solo examiner conducts the examinations for the external examination boards. However, the schools or institutions which had their own internal examination system, generally employed a panel. Orla, who examined in both contexts, found that there was less pressure on the examiner when there was a panel, stating that:

usually you go with the majority [decision]; but when you're on your own, you have the whole responsibility [Orla/int:56].

Katia, who had experienced a panel of examiners in her home country, questioned the validity of having one person assessing.

I'm not very happy that one person decides "it was good" or "it was bad" because performing is a very subjective thing [Katia/int:115].

She was critical of the fact that the examiners conduct examinations for all instruments although '*some of them don't play the instrument themselves!*' This was confirmed by Saoirse who stated '*we examine all the instruments, we are trained to examine all the instruments*'. This applied not only to instruments, but to genres. Although Ingrid was a classically trained musician, she mainly examined traditional Irish music:

I haven't actually done much classical [examining] for UKBI. I was trained alright but the need was for traditional and I was always sent to do traditional more than the classical [Ingrid/int:103-106].

Given the impact of the outcome for both the student and teacher, there is an great responsibility on the examiner as their adjudication has serious consequences. This pressure was felt by the examiners and both Lena and Orla mentioned '*teachers listening at the door*'. Orla described being '*terrified*' when examining at certain centres:

you have the teacher listening outside the door, then perhaps not liking your marks and sending in complaints about you; and it's all your fault so I find that very stressful [Orla/int:53].

On the other hand there is pressure coming from the examination board, when teachers make complaints about the results:

if you fail somebody you get called up [by the Board], you're not supposed to fail anybody, but what about standards? [Orla/int:65].

It would appear that the examiner in this case felt straightjacketed to deliver certain positive results. These comments suggest a conflict of interests between the different stakeholders: the examination board which is concerned with maintaining its teacher and student clients; the teachers, whose professionalism is held to account by results; the parents and children who are trusting the professionals to deliver a quality education; and the examiner who has standards which he or she wishes to maintain.

6.5 Impact on Pedagogy

6.5.1 Time punctuates the rate of learning, which is graded and stratified

Sooner or later the graded examination comes; and then their foot is on the ladder and they're on it for life [Declan/int:51].

Declan argued that once students moved on to graded examinations, teaching became systematised. Here he outlines the joy of teaching beginners before they embark on the examination 'ladder':

The freedom - you don't know where it's going and you're not bound by the examination and having to do a set number of scales; the children are learning at their own pace. I can experiment, I can be very creative. I can get music to suit from here, there, and everywhere, it can go anywhere. You can form groups, there's no deadline and it's a nice experience for the child. The real question is: what's the musical experience that's right for the child? [Once the examinations commence] you're in a system that involves components: the scales, the technical study, the three pieces. No matter what you do you're on this ladder. I try and delay it for as long as I can [Declan/int:50-51]

Declan's description of teaching and learning before the graded examinations take over is one of freedom and exploration. His comments suggest that teacher agency is diminished by the graded examinations.

Most teachers in my study however, embraced the structure that the grades provided. Betty, Saoirse, Lena, and Ingrid all considered examinations to be an essential part of the process of learning, to provide clear attainable goals:

if a student isn't going to make the examination, we give them their own in-house examination. Because you have to set your goal and if you lose the goal, you have to find another one. [Music is] one area you can't wander along aimlessly, you have to say "at the end of this term we're going to have X" [Ingrid/int:127].

Clearly there are different views on the desirability of having such a defined assessment structure, but in general, most teachers favoured this approach, despite some acknowledged shortcomings.

6.5.2 Selection and omission of skills

How many people do you meet who say "oh I have Grade 8" and they can't sit down and play a chord? [Ingrid/int:145]

The phenomenon of students achieving high grades, but not being able to play anything at the end of the process, was mentioned on a number of occasions. This may be due to the product oriented examinations, and the lack of emphasis on the transferability of skills. The fragmented nature of the examination process was mentioned by Declan:

[The examinations are] fragmented and built on these components; and if you're concentrating on the components, maybe you're missing the big picture ... But teachers have told me, we'll have to examine scales otherwise we won't teach them [Declan/int:177].

Ingrid mentioned some skills which should be included in the examination. She implied that if these skills were included in the examination, they would be taught; and pointed to a disconnection between the primary activity of performing repertoire and the other skills being assessed.

... there are no keyboard skills. I'd love to see keyboard skills at some level for pianists; a little bit of figured bass, harmonising tunes, actual chord playing and the voice leading would be quite useful [Ingrid/int:140-145]

It seems ironic that 'keyboard skills' are not assessed at piano examinations. This omission indicates the focus on product and performance, rather than assessing transferable skills, such as harmonising tunes and voice leading. Ingrid also implied that learners can be reluctant to 'waste time' on anything that is not part of the examination syllabus, such as doing technical exercises that will not be explicitly assessed.

6.5.3 How students achieve on different components

It amazes me that students would have the Grade 8 pieces fantastically learnt, and then get 5 or 6 [out of 10] for sight-reading [Saoirse/int:62].

The examiners varied in their views on how well students achieved at the different components in the examinations. Sight-reading was generally found to be weak. Lena stated:

The worst area is sight-reading, followed by scales, then aural tests, theory and the repertoire is generally the best! [Lena/int:42].

Saoirse agreed that sight-reading was the weakest area – with piano students faring the worst.

Overall, the comments of the participants indicated that there was a clear selection of skills, and these were generic across all instruments. Scales measured technique, regardless of whether they were the most appropriate means of developing the required technical skills. Despite a focus on learning through text, sight-reading skills were generally weaker than other areas, especially for piano students. Aural tests were generic, and unrelated to the specific instrument, so not necessarily transferable to 'playing by ear'. In addition, there was little indication of creative skills being assessed in the form of improvisation or composition.

6.5.4 Cultural representation and hegemony

There are mixed genres; some jazz and things, but it's all going in one direction, it's going towards classical [Declan/int:107].

In my IFS, I found that the graded examinations strongly impacted on the repertoire that students played (O'Sullivan, 2010). I have already outlined these findings in section 2.3.1 and to summarise, it was found that there was some jazz in the pre-Grade 5 repertoire (approx. 18%), but after Grade 5, only classical music was represented, with all other genres being absent from the Grade 6 – 8 repertoire. Students doing grades were playing almost the exact same repertoire as their peers, indicating very limited selection or choice. It was mooted that students of a similar age could grow up playing the same pieces, all arriving at college with the same limited repertoire! This seemed to indicate, that while some contemporary genres are included in the repertoire at the earlier stages – possibly for motivational purposes – the ultimate learning objective is, as Declan stated, '*all going towards classical*'.

It could be argued that if students were not required to play classical music for their examinations, they might not play it at all. However, similar arguments could be made for other genres, such as traditional Irish music. The examination boards are now providing examinations in other genres (as evidenced by Ingrid examining traditional Irish music). Some writers have expressed concern that current examination structures do not meet the requirements of these genres. It is somewhat ironic, for example, that a classical musician (Ingrid) should examine Irish traditional music for a UK examination Board! Almost two decades ago, Salaman (1994) expressed concern about the possible conflation of genres within one examination system:

While we can accept that different skills are appropriate for different musical traditions, we should question the implications of bringing the instruments of one tradition into the assessment orbit of another. How much should be sacrificed by the 'newcomers' to meet the demands of the 'establishment' and can the 'establishment' learn something of value from the 'newcomers'? (Salaman, 1994, p.12).

Despite these concerns, the examination syllabi for traditional musics, jazz music and popular music, are constructed to similar templates of those of classical music; including solo examinations, similarly weighted components, and a focus on product rather than transferable skills. This may be due to the expediency of conducting the examinations (which must be ‘portable’), rather than the consideration of educational factors. For example, some examinations in more contemporary genres do include improvisation (along with aural tests, sight-reading and theory). The ‘improvisation’ test, however, involves the student being given 30 seconds to respond to a written stimulus (which is also played by the examiner) at an appropriate stage in the examination (Trinity College London, 2007). Given that improvisation usually has an aural stimulus, and often involves responding to other musicians, this test is administered out of context. The authenticity¹¹ of this test is, therefore, questionable, and may be construct under-representative (Black and Wiliam, 2012). The concern is that jazz teachers might end up teaching improvisation to meet the requirements of the examination, and consequently the teaching becomes contextually contrived rather than authentic.

6.5.5 Moving the deckchairs a bit

We have twelve violin teachers and they told me they want these things because they feel they would cut corners themselves [Declan/int:179].

Declan reported that teachers were accepting of the *status quo* in instrumental teaching, and many were resistant to change. He wanted to challenge existing practices, but described his experience of leading a process of syllabus development as ‘*moving the deck chairs a bit!*’

¹¹ Authentic assessment is taken as ‘an assessment composed of performance tasks and activities designed to replicate important real-world challenges’ (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.337).

As [chairperson], I threw out devil's advocate questions like 'Do we need scales?' And the answer is "Oh we have to have scales, if we didn't have scales we wouldn't do them". And "Do we really need to make 7-year-olds do a sight-reading test?" "Oh we have to do that because we wouldn't teach it properly". We ended up having almost the same as before, only we moved the deckchairs a bit! ... Amongst our teachers, half are so conservative and traditional that you couldn't budge them; it would be a huge culture shock for them to do anything slightly different. The others were quite broadminded, ready for anything, but you have to respect the traditional opinions and the received knowledge; people want to keep going the way they were taught themselves because they feel that it was a very effective way of teaching [Declan/int:178-180].

Declan attempted to get teachers to interrogate the examination practices and processes, but with little success. The rationale for keeping the same components had more to do with teaching than learning. Teachers feared that they would not teach different elements 'properly' if they were not on the examination syllabus. There was little evidence of critical analysis as to why certain aspects of assessment were appropriate for learning, and the 'received knowledge' based on teachers' own experience ultimately prevailed.

These views call to mind the 'professional myopia' referred to by Jones (2007, p.3). The absence of 'prelesson production of elaborate teaching plans' Kennell (2002, p.251) in the instrumental teaching context was mentioned previously. With an increased focus on the 'reflective practitioner' in education, and the widespread use of process- and port-folios in teacher preparation, this omission is remarkable. In instrumental teacher preparation, the focus remains on the development of musical rather than teaching skills. The highly prescriptive examination syllabi of the graded examination boards may substitute for independent teacher planning, with teachers becoming over-reliant on this crutch. For example, Ingrid commented that she used the examination syllabus whether or not she was doing an examination with the student:

you follow the syllabus if you're going for an examination. And even if you're not going for an examination you might take repertoire, I often use the CSM syllabus [Ingrid/int:140].

6.5.6 Change or hegemony?

Some teachers wished to present a broader curriculum, but the constraints of the examinations, pressure from parents and students, and time factors limited the agency of the teachers to change their practices. McKinney states that within different social structures there is an expectation of 'typical behaviour to be enacted under typical circumstances as typically perceived within a social system' (McKinney, 1969, p.1). The teachers in my study seemed to be aware of 'patterned expectations defining ... *proper* behaviour' (*ibid.*). Such behaviour is 'positively enforced by the individuals own motives for conformity and by the sanctions of others' (*ibid.*). The extent to which the conformity was elective or imposed varied amongst the participants.

Declan mentioned that some of the teachers in his school were conservative and others were '*broadminded*' and open to new ideas. He put this down to age, implying that the older teachers were more conservative. There was a similar divergence of opinions evident in my study, but I would argue that this could not be explained by the age or the education *level* of the participants. Rather it might be explained by the *nature* of their education. For example, four of the participants in my study were at doctorate level (three of whom were of a similar age). Two presented what could be considered *conservative* views, while the other two presented more innovative thinking. The conservative views were expressed by practitioners with a *musicology* background, while the more innovative views came from those researching in the area of *music education*. The differing views therefore, may be a consequence of their different professional and educational paths. Frequently, highly skilled instrumentalists are not required to have specific teaching qualifications to enter the instrumental teaching profession. Where they do have teaching qualifications, these are usually awarded from the professional bodies, rather than from universities as would be the norm for other disciplines. The focus of these qualifications is on ensuring that the candidates

themselves have very high performance standards – commendable in itself – but this may take precedence over pedagogic issues.

A further explanation for the divergence of opinions might be Bernstein's concept of 'strong' classification and 'weak' classification. The domain of professional preparation within instrumental education, remains within the PRF, which has strong classification, in that the discourse is not largely permeated by contact with other disciplines. On the other hand, the discourse for education has 'weak' classification in that it draws from different foundations including psychology, sociology and philosophy. The issues and consequences of these findings for music teacher preparation will be further explored in Chapter 8.

Before proceeding, in the next chapter, to examine the aspirations, objectives and views of parents and students, Table 6.1 provides an overview of the findings of the previous two chapters. It presents a summary of Shulman's three structures as applied to Key Signature Pedagogy, and indicates how these structures are supported by assessment practices. It then maps the different facets within these structures against Bernstein's 'performance' model. The table shows that Key Signature Pedagogy is closely aligned with the 'performance' model, except for aspects of the *deep structure*, which are not regulated by the professional institutions.

Shulman’s Signature Pedagogy	Teaching and Learning	Assessment	Bernstein’s Performance Model
Surface Structure ‘the concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning’ (Shulman, 2005, p.54)	Teaching is one-to-one in specialised locations – studio or conservatoire.	Summative, solo, high-stakes examinations.	Teaching and learning spaces are clearly marked and regulated.
	Master-apprentice dyad. Learner work is teacher directed focusing on faithful interpretation of canon rather than on personal interpretation.	Prescribed repertoire and demonstration of skills are explicit based on prescribed syllabi.	Rules for production of learner work are explicit and pre-determined.
	Learning is componential rather than holistic, focusing on repertoire, technique, sight-reading, ear tests and theory.	Assessment focuses on components.	Procedures for teaching and learning are clearly marked in terms of form and function in the acquisition of knowledge.
	Sequence and pace of learning is directed through graded method books, with the expectation of a grade per year.	Graded examination books outline explicit component requirements provided by examination boards.	Learning is structured in terms of sequence and pace.
	Selection of skills is evident in what is present and omitted; for example improvisation is largely neglected.	Certain musical skills remain un-assessed leading to construct under-representation.	Selection or framing of knowledge determines what is learnt.
	Focus is on a prescribed classical canon and developing techniques to perform this.	Assessment of performance is primarily of classical repertoire and techniques to support it.	Focus is on the specialisation of subjects and skills.
Deep Structure ‘a set of assumptions about how best to impart ... knowledge and know-how’ (Shulman, 2005, p.55)	Structured participation in ensembles and orchestras.	Evaluation and motivation through process, participation, and working with peers. Not formally assessed.	Specialised teaching spaces with professional expectations of students.
	Elective participation in ensembles and other group and social musical settings.	Evaluation is process oriented and informal, through peer and social interaction. Not formally assessed.	Not necessarily aligned with the ‘performance’ model; classification is weaker, with contexts including non-specialised and informal spaces.
	Participation in concerts to develop performance skills, and the personal skills required for a specialised future.	Performance informally evaluated by audiences.	Evaluation is product based, with emphasis on what is missing in the product.
	Participation in competitions to develop skills required for a competitive professional future.	Performance assessed through competition with peers.	Evaluation is product based with emphasis on what is missing in the product.
Implicit Structure ‘the moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions’ (Shulman, 2005, p.55)	Professional bodies, which support a classical music discourse, explicitly structure and legitimise the learning through method books and graded examination syllabi.	Certification of the examinations and specific components legitimise and maintain existing structures.	Control of the learning process is explicit in terms of space, time and discourse, and legitimises the structures and classifications employed.
	Teacher professionalism is embedded in student success, which may lead to ‘repair service’(Bernstein, 1996, p.61), deficit teaching approach, and the ‘tyrant teacher’ (Creech, 2006, p.374)	Examination boards are used as quality control (O’Neill, 1996).	Student performance is graded and objectivised and inheres the professionalism of the teacher; it gives rise ‘to a potential repair service ... practice and distribution of blame’ (Bernstein, 1996, p.61).
	The graded examination system defines curriculum from beginner to professional, with the paradigm of the concert musician representing the specialised future.	Specialised path from beginner to professional through the graded examination system	Frequently external regulation of curriculum, and selection, sequencing and pacing, leading towards ‘specialised futures’ (Bernstein, 1996, p.62).
	One-to-one mode of teaching is expensive, which may make it <i>elitist</i> .	Assessment strategies are limited by the expediency of administering assessment tasks, and the cost of solo examinations.	Transmission costs in ‘performance’ models are generally less than for ‘competence’ models; instrumental teaching is therefore an exception. However, assessment of process in instrumental learning could be more costly than the current product oriented system.
	Classification for instrumental music teaching remains strong because it is widely directed by the profession (PRF) remaining outside of the ORF, and is delivered in specialised spaces (studios and conservatoires) away from possible influences of other disciplines.	The assessment system legitimises and upholds the prevailing institutional practices.	Classification is strong.

Table 6.1: Mapping Key Signature Pedagogy and Assessment against Bernstein’s Performance Model

6.6 Summary and Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter indicate that Key Signature Pedagogy is largely determined by the summative assessment practices of the graded examination system. The perceived benefits of the graded examination system have been outlined, and these include motivation, certification, accountability, and improving teacher and student performance.

In relating these findings to Shulman's concept of 'signature pedagogy', I argue that the summative assessment system focuses exclusively on the *surface structure*. On the other hand, the activities of the *deep structure* remain largely unassessed. As a result, the activities of the *deep structure* (such as participation in ensemble or other performance opportunities) remain arbitrary and are frequently un-accredited, and as a consequence, may be undervalued. In the next chapter, I will examine the experience of some students and argue that those who do not have the opportunity to implement their skills beyond the *surface structure* level are more likely to become disillusioned and disenchanted with instrumental learning. Those who showed most satisfaction with their instrumental lessons were those who had opportunities to participate at a *deep structure* level.

Because of the expediency of operating an assessment system which is required to be universally applicable and 'portable' (Boyton, 2006, p.94), there is a danger of assessing 'that which can be *easily* assessed, rather than that which is *worth* assessing' (Fautley, 2010, p.63, original emphasis). In a changing social, cultural and technological society, the demands on musicians (professional and amateur) are evolving and fluctuating, and consequently, adaptable and transferable skills are becoming ever more critical. It is therefore necessary to re-evaluate the desired learning outcomes and epistemology of instrumental teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that they are

fit for purpose in today's society, and meet the needs and interests of the young people, who are the end users.

Fautley (2010) discusses the role that assessment can play in advancing different types of knowledge and argues that 'knowledge' is often confused with 'content'. He outlines contrasting epistemologies for instrumental learning and classroom music. According to his classification, the skills acquired in instrumental learning involve technical, reading, interpretive, and performance knowledge and skills – very much those which are assessed in the graded instrumental examination. By contrast, the knowledge required for classroom music tasks involves creative, affective, organisation, group, communication (oral and musical), and performance skills (*ibid.*). Based on the findings of my study, I argue that the epistemological basis of instrumental teaching and learning is excessively limited by the summative assessment system employed. In addition, the graded examination system promulgates and maintains the 'performance' model as outlined by Bernstein, in contrast with more 'competence' models employed in other areas of education, including classroom music.

In Chapter 4, I discussed Smith's concept of institutional ethnography (2002). She refers to 'relations that extend beyond the local and particular, connecting ... with others known and unknown in an impersonal organisation' (2002, p.17). The teacher participants in my study were from different institutions, different geographical regions, had different educational levels, and played different instruments. Yet, through the professional institutions, there was a commonality in terms of their experiences as learners and as teachers. Aside from a few notable exceptions, common and pervasive routines, practices, assumptions, and values were shared by the participants.

In Chapter 8, I will return to the institutional impact on Key Signature Pedagogy and assessment, examining the ways in which teachers'

lives and work ...are hooked into the lives and work of others in relations of which most of us are not aware (Smith, 2002, p.18).

I will look at issues of teacher agency and the role of music teacher preparation in developing adaptable practitioners, who are critical and independent thinkers.

CHAPTER 7

Parents' and Students' Views on Key Signature Pedagogy

It's a bit of a waste of money Mum!

Joey (aged 10): *Mum, how much have you spent on my music lessons at this stage?*

Mum (absentmindedly): *I've absolutely no idea, Joey!*

Joey: *But Mum, is it hundreds or thousands of euro?*

Mum (suddenly considering): *Well, I suppose it is thousands of euro at this stage.*

Joey (sagely): *I'm afraid it's a bit of a waste of money, Mum!*

7.1 Introduction

I opened my IFS with this exchange, and I am citing it here again because this chapter deals primarily with the views of parents and students involved in instrumental lessons. This conversation took place as Joey and his mother were leaving the venue after a graded instrumental examination. Although Joey fared quite well in the examination, his mother was questioning the wisdom of continuing instrumental lessons for her three sons, all of whom were, if not entirely disinterested, somewhat indifferent to the process. Joey's question highlighted the cumulative financial cost of instrumental tuition over many years. His mother was concerned that the motivation was coming from her rather than from the children.

The previous two chapters examined Key Signature Pedagogy and how assessment practices, in particular the graded examination system, impact on that pedagogy. This chapter deals with RQ3: 'How does the signature pedagogy [of instrumental music] coincide (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the different social actors in this process?' The views of teachers and examiners have been

taken into account in the previous chapters, so the attention here is on examining data obtained from questionnaires completed by parents, and from a focus group with students.

My starting point for this research, reported in the IFS, involved students' opinions on aspects of their instrumental tuition (see Appendix 14). Because students are the central actors in the process of instrumental learning, I considered it important to return to their views in the light of the subsequent research undertaken for my RBT. The chapter will conclude with vignettes of the students' experiences of instrumental learning, but firstly, the views of parents will be presented.

7.2 Profile of Parents

A total of 300 questionnaires, with open and closed questions, were distributed by post to parents at an independent music school in southern Ireland. 95 were returned indicating a response rate of 31.6% (see Chapter 4, Methodology). This school is typical of the independent music schools which have developed in Ireland over the past 25 years. Parents pay, in full, for tuition. Such an investment would be beyond the means of many parents, therefore it can be surmised that the majority are middle-class families, although some parents reported making financial sacrifices to provide these opportunities for their children. A few respondents had children attending other schemes where their children were taking a second instrument.

The data indicate that two-thirds (66%) of the parents had taken instrumental lessons themselves, and 45% of these had done so for four years or more. Piano lessons were the most highly represented at 71%, with guitar being second at 20%. Of those who had taken instrumental lessons, over half (51.5%) had done graded examinations, and half of those had achieved Grade 5 or more. A large majority of those who had

taken examinations had done so on piano (83%), and piano was by far the most represented in the senior grades.

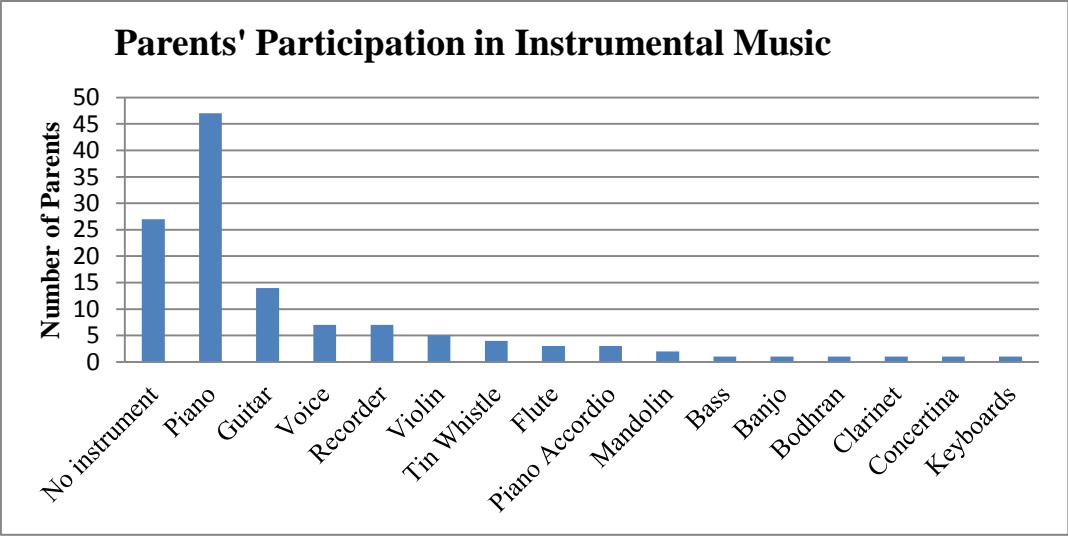


Figure 7.1: Parents' participation in instrumental music (n=95)

7.2.1 Profile of the students represented by the parents

The parents represented a total of n=122 students taking instrumental music lessons; 65.5% of whom were female, 32% were male, and information was not provided in respect of 2.5%. The age distribution of the students is quite broad ranging from age 6 to 23, but most range between age 7 and 14. Figure 7.2 indicates the age profile of the students represented in the sample.

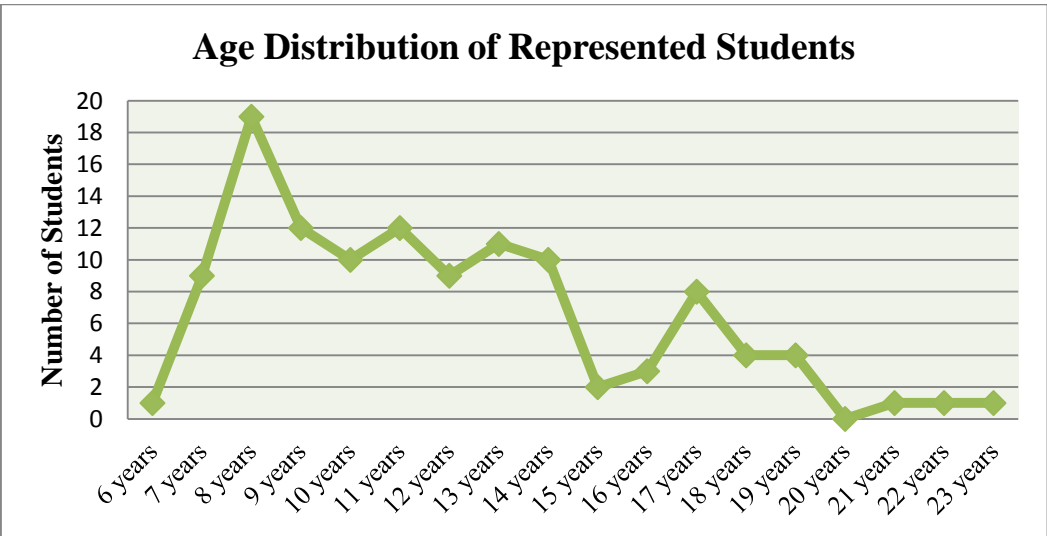


Figure 7.2: Age distribution of represented students

Figure 7.3 below indicates the instruments played by the 122 students. N=13 students played two instruments, and n=2 played three instruments, so this corresponds to 139 instrumental lessons in total; the detail relating to instruments and grades was not provided for n=7. The multi-instrumentalists were predominantly female, with only one boy taking two instruments.

There were some gender differences in relation to instrument choice as indicated in Figure 7.3. Piano and guitar were the most popular choice for boys and split evenly in terms of selection, with 32.5% of the boys each taking these instruments. On the other hand, only 10% of the boys had chosen violin and 7.5%, flute. Piano was the most popular choice for girls at 61%, with 21.5% taking violin and 15% taking flute. Only 5% of girls were taking guitar lessons (as opposed to 32.5% for boys), with three of these being second instruments and only one girl indicating guitar only.

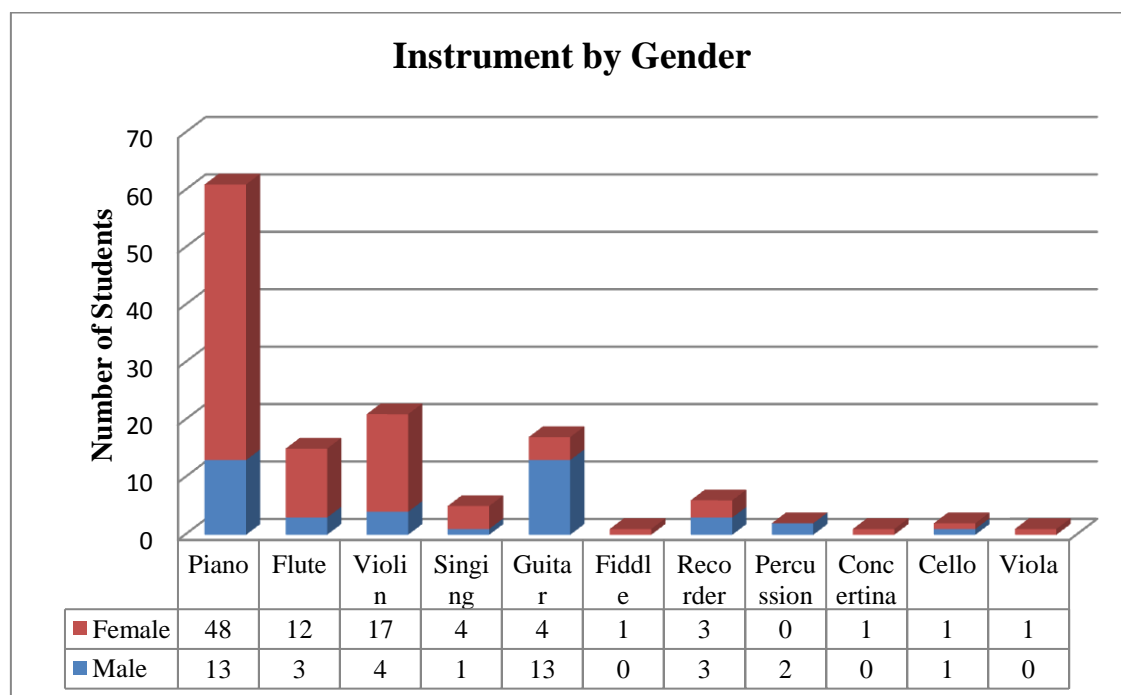


Figure 7.3: *Instrument by gender (n=122)*

N=87 students (63%) had taken examinations, and n=45 had not (32%); with n=7 (5%) not providing this information. N=5 students had done examinations on two instruments and n=2 had done examinations on three instruments. Table 7.1 below indicates the instruments played by the grade taken.

A closer look at those not taking examinations indicates possible explanations. Most of those who have not done examinations on piano, flute and violin were aged 9 or under (with the exception of three students), and consequently may not yet have entered for examinations. The other three students may be older beginners or exceptions to the rule. Recorder is taught as a class instrument with preparatory groups, and this accounts for these students (who all fit the age profile for beginners) not taking examinations. No examination was taken in concertina and fiddle, which is in keeping with practices in traditional Irish music teaching (although examinations have recently been introduced in this genre). When these factors are taken into account, the data indicate a high take up of examinations.

Guitar, however, presented a different picture, with only 2 of the 17 students taking examinations. This may be explained by the fact that both classical and popular guitar are offered, and students taking popular guitar often do not take examinations. The association between the instrument played and examination taking corresponds closely with the findings of my IFS, which is to be expected as the study took place in the same school (O'Sullivan-Taaffe, 2011).

Grade	Pre-G1	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	Post-G8	No exam taken	Total
Piano	10	11	6	5	8	1	7	2	4	1	6	61
Violin	2	2	2		1	2	1	1	1		9	21
Flute		3		2		1		4	1		4	15
Guitar					1	1					15	17
Recorder											6	6
Singing		1			1	1					2	5
Cello			1								1	2
Percussion								2				2
Concertina											1	1
Fiddle											1	1
Viola							1					1
Total	12	17	9	7	11	6	9	9	6	1	45	132

Table 7.1: Instrument by grade (G1 = Grade 1 etc.) (n=132)

The following sections outline the parents' views on instrumental teaching and learning.

The aim was to understand what motivates parents to enrol their children, what outcomes were most important for parents, and to establish if the process of instrumental tuition met with their expectations and aspirations. Firstly, the findings of the quantitative data will be presented, with the qualitative findings presented later in the chapter. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire).

7.3 Quantitative Findings

7.3.1 Why did you enrol your child in instrumental lessons?

Parents were asked why they enrolled their children for instrumental lessons, by rating a series of statements on a five point Likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. A mean score (M) was calculated for each statement, and the standard deviation (SD) is also reported. Parents considered that music was as important as other subjects, and this statement received the highest rating (M = 4.2; SD = .76). They also considered music to be as important as sport (M = 4.13; SD = .85). The two primary reasons for enrolling their children for music lessons were 'to participate socially in music' (M = 4.16; SD = .79) and 'to help develop academically' (M = 4.05; SD = .83). 'S/he expressed an interest' also ranked high (M = 4.04; SD = .89) and 's/he showed signs of

musical talent' ($M = 3.94$; $SD = .92$). Providing career options ($M = 3.76$; $SD = .98$) and 'music exams would be beneficial' ($M = 3.74$; $SD = .94$) ranked at mid-table. Access at the local school was important for some parents ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.54$). (Note the school where this study took place had centres operating in several primary schools in the city suburbs).

It is understandable that peer influence was low, as children usually begin at a young age when decisions are likely to be taken by parents ($M = 2.23$; $SD = .92$). $N=49$ of the parents indicated that they wanted the same opportunity for their child as they had ($M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.37$). $N = 35$ indicated that they wanted to provide an opportunity for their children that they had not had themselves ($M = 3$; $SD = 1.4$). During the analysis of the data, it was found however, that there were no significant differences in the opinions expressed by the parents who had, or had not, taken instrumental lessons. (See Appendix 16 for added information on the statistical tests of independence for the different statements in respect of parents who had or had not played instruments). Figure 7.4 indicates the mean scores for the different statements and shows how parents rated these statements in order of importance.

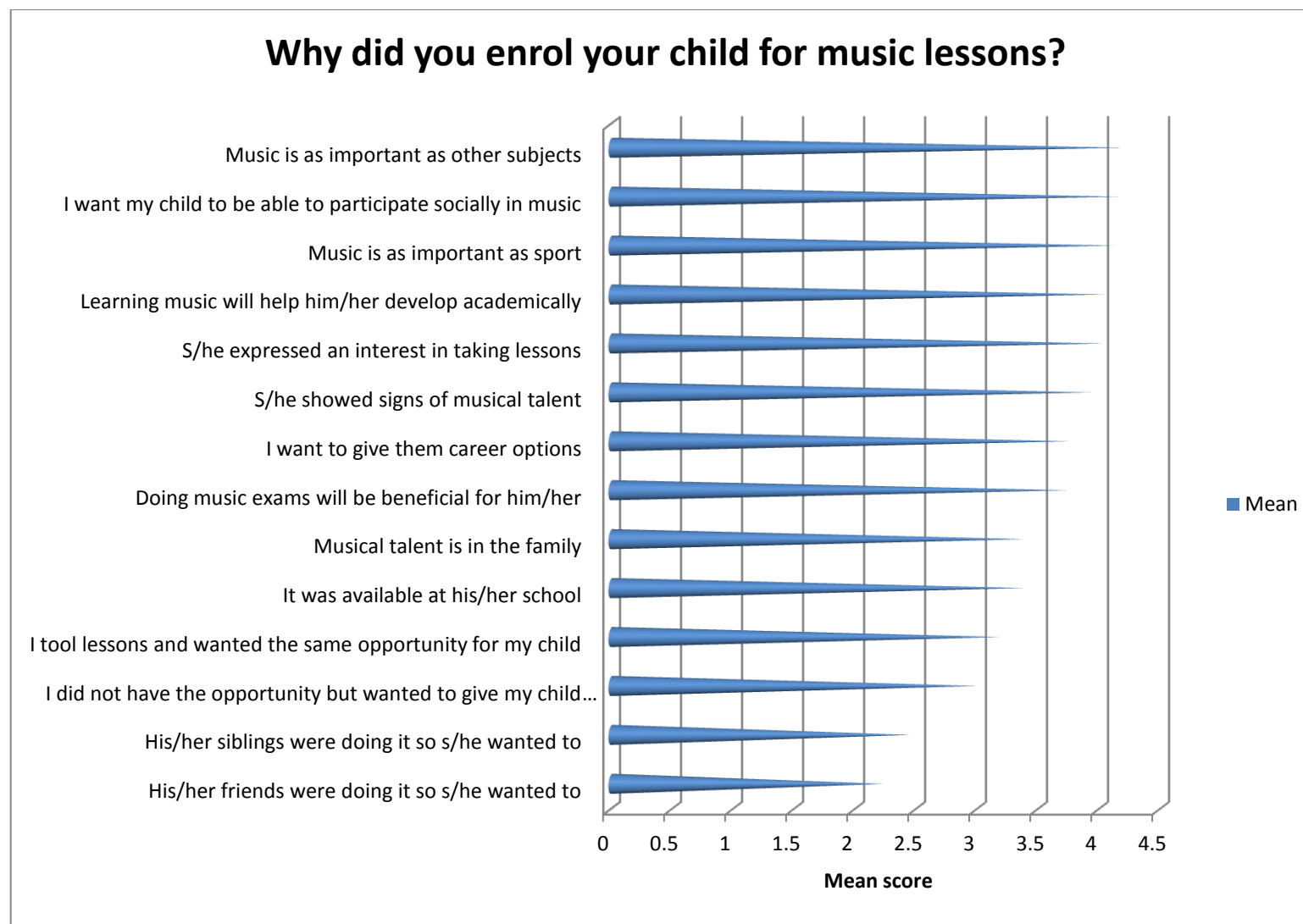


Figure 7.4: Why did you enrol your child for music lessons? (n=95)

7.3.2 The most important outcomes from learning instrumental music

Parents were asked to rank certain outcomes from learning instrumental music, in order of importance, from a list of ten. Some of these were musical outcomes and others were general educational or social, non-cognate outcomes. Parents were asked to rank these on a scale from 1 – 10. An aggregate score was calculated for the rankings, and is represented in Figure 7.5 which indicates the outcomes in order of importance.

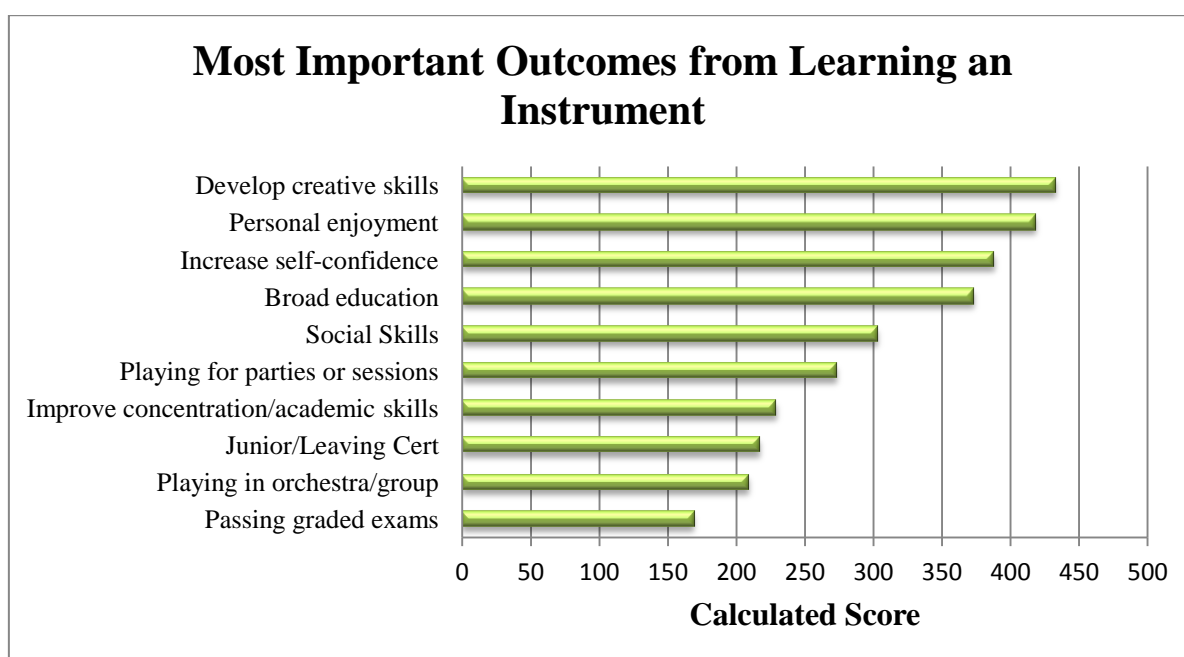


Figure 7.5: *Most important outcomes from learning an instrument*

The most important outcomes from learning instrumental music according to parents were developing creative skills, playing for personal enjoyment, increasing self-confidence and obtaining a broad education. Developing social skills and playing at parties scored in the mid-range. The least important learning outcomes according to parents were (in order of *least* importance), to pass graded examinations, to be able to play in an orchestra or group, to be able to do music as a subject for Junior/Leaving Certificate¹² and to improve concentration and academic skills. In looking at this, it has to be acknowledged that parents will want to portray themselves in a positive light, and will know that they should value intrinsic qualities rather than examinations.

¹² The State examinations in secondary school, taken are approximately age 15 and 18 years respectively.

7.3.3 Parents' views on the most important musical skills

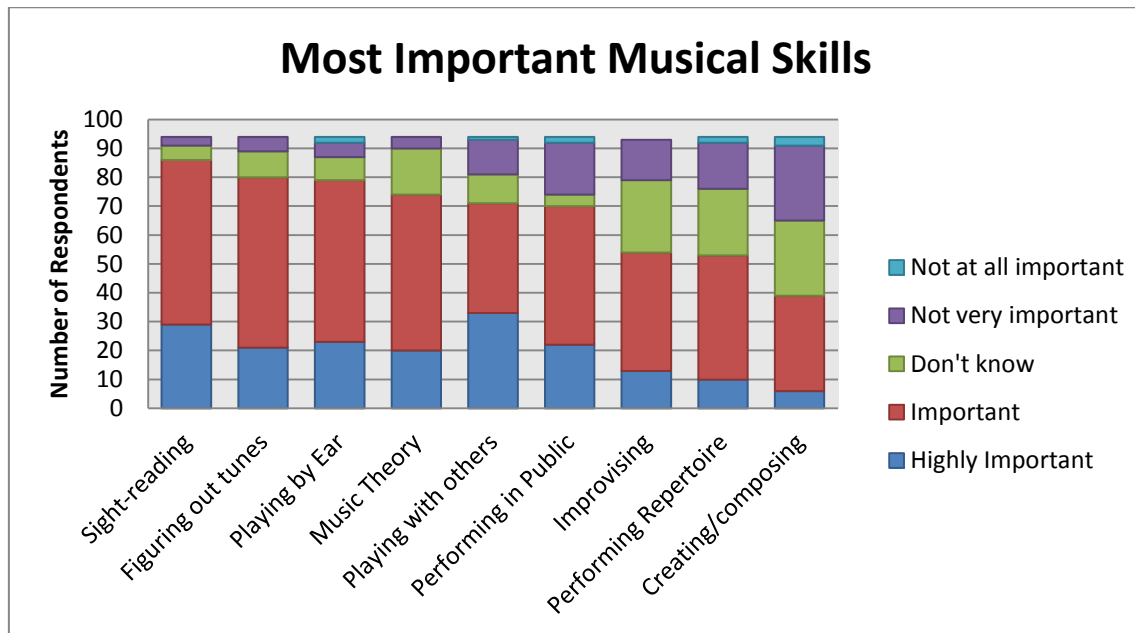


Figure 7.6: *Most important musical skills*

Parents were asked to rate specific musical skills on a scale from 'highly important' (1) to 'not important at all' (5). Figure 7.6 indicates the responses from parents for each category. 'Sight-reading' ($M = 4.2$; $SD = .68$), 'figuring out tunes' ($M = 4.03$; $SD = .73$) and 'playing by ear' ($M = 3.99$; $SD = .86$) were the three most important skills. Parents selected skills which would enable their children to become independent musicians. A surprising finding was the low rating for 'playing repertoire' ($M = 3.46$; $SD = .97$) given that this is the primary focus in instrumental lessons. Only 11% ($n=10$) considered this 'highly important.' 'Playing with others' ($M = 3.99$; $SD = 1.09$) had the highest indication for 'highly important' thereby confirming that parents considered the social aspects of playing music as being highly important. Creating and composing ranked as the least important skills ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 1$), although parents expressed 'developing creative skills' as the most important outcome for learning music. This apparent contradiction may be a result of parents' interpretation of what it is to develop creative skills, and they may perceive playing or performing as the manifestation of creativity.

7.3.4 Parents' opinions on the graded examinations

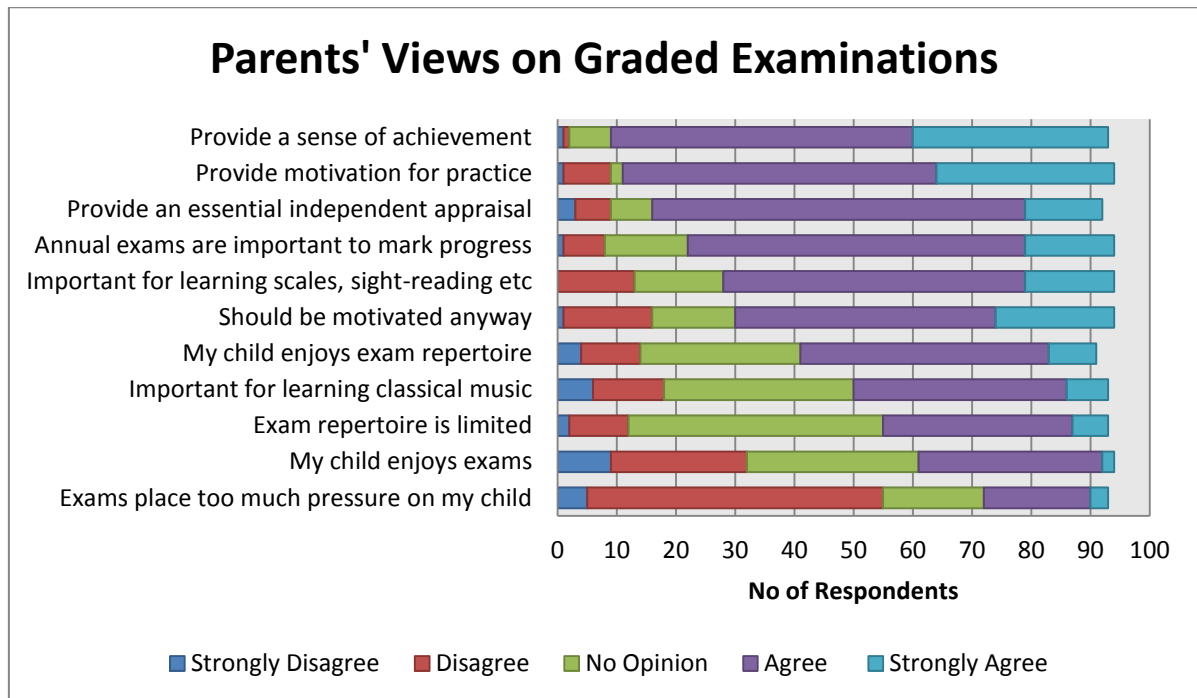


Figure 7.7: *Parents' opinions on graded examinations*

Figure 7.7 shows parents' responses to statements relating to the graded examinations. 80% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that graded examinations provided 'an essential independent appraisal of their child's progress' ($M = 3.84$; $SD = .87$) and 76% of parents indicated that they agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (16%) that annual examinations were important to mark their child's progress ($M = 3.83$; $SD = .82$).

A number of reasons emerged as to why parents considered examinations to be so important. The most significant is that 89% of parents believed that passing examinations gave their child a sense of achievement ($M = 4.32$; $SD = .72$). Motivation to practise was the second most important reason, with 87% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this ($M = 4.1$; $SD = .88$). 70% of parents considered that examinations were important for learning scales, sight-reading and ear tests ($M = 3.72$; $SD = .9$). 47% considered examinations important for learning classical music ($M = 3.29$; $SD = 1$) –

which would be the most significant outcome of the examinations, since the repertoire is almost entirely classical (O'Sullivan-Taaffe, 2011).

35% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children enjoyed the examinations (mean = 2.92; SD = 1.03). 60% of parents did not consider that examinations put too much pressure on their children (M = 2.61; SD = .97), although 22% felt that they did. 41% agreed or strongly agreed that the examination repertoire was limited, and 46% had 'no opinion' on the issue of repertoire (M = 3.44; SD = .96). 46% of parents considered that their children liked the repertoire they play for examinations (M = 3.44; SD = .96); only 16% disagreed and 29% had no opinion on this.

7.3.5 Statistical tests for independence

Further analysis was carried out by treating the data as categorical to explore, for example, possible differences between the views of parents who had or had not played instruments. Because categorical data were used, Pearson's chi-squared test (χ^2) of independence was used with $\alpha = .05$ as criterion for significance. No significant differences emerged between parents who had and had not played an instrument.

The χ^2 test was also applied to test the null hypothesis that there were no differences of opinions between the parents of pianists and non-pianists. Again, there were few differences, *except* in relation to some statements on examinations, as can be seen in the following tables. Parents were asked how they rated different performance situations for motivating their child. No differences were found for various performance situations (concerts, competitions, etc.) other than for examinations. A significant difference was reported between parents of pianists and non-pianists with the pianists' parents indicating that playing for examinations was more important for motivating their children (see table 7.2).

Q4 – How do you rate the following performance situations for motivating your child?

Playing for exams

	Parents of Pianists N=52	Parents of Non-pianists N=42
Highly important	8	9
N=17	15.4%	21.4%
Important	36	18
N=54	69.2%	42.9%
Not available	0	6
N=6	0%	14.3%
Not very important	7	6
N=13	13.5%	14.3%
Not at all important	1	3
N=4	1.9%	7.1%
M	3.82	3.51
SD	.92	1.19
df	4	4

$\chi^2(4, n=94)$ p -value = 0.016.

Table 7.2: *Parents' views on the importance of playing for exams*

Parents were asked about their opinions regarding examinations, and differences emerged between the parents of pianists and non-pianists on some statements as indicated in tables 7.3 and 7.4.

The exams place too much pressure on my child.

	Parents of Pianists N=51	Parents of Non-pianists N=42
Strongly disagree	2	3
N=5	3.9%	7.1%
Disagree	33	17
N=50	64.7%	40.5%
No opinion	4	13
N=17	7.8%	31%
Agree	9	9
N=18	17.6%	21.4%
Strongly agree	3	0
N=3	5.9%	0%
M	3.43	3.33
SD	1.02	.9
df	4	4

$\chi^2(4, n=93)$ p -value = 0.015

Table 7.3: *Parents' views on the pressure of examinations*

A significant difference emerged; parents of pianists disagree more that the examinations place too much pressure; i.e. they do not consider that examinations put too much pressure on their children.

My child enjoys the repertoire he/she plays for exams.

	Parents of Pianists N=51	Parents of Non-pianists N=41
Strongly disagree	3	1
N=4	5.9%	2.4%
Disagree	8	2
N=10	15.7%	4.9%
No opinion	8	19
N=27	15.7%	46.3%
Agree	28	15
N=43	54.9%	36.6%
Strongly agree	4	4
N=8	7.8%	9.8%
M	2.57	2.54
SD	1.04	.84
df	4	4

$\chi^2(4, n=92)$ p -value = 0.017

Table 7.4: *Parents' views on the examination repertoire*

A significant difference emerged; parents of pianists agree more that their child enjoys the examination repertoire.

The differences in views between parents of pianists and non-pianists regarding examinations reflects those expressed by students in my IFS. The reported differences in opinions between the pianists and non-pianist students in the IFS are summarised here:

- More pianists enjoyed playing for examinations whereas a larger percentage of the non-pianist group did not enjoy playing for examinations.
- A larger percentage of pianists agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning exam repertoire.
- Pianists more strongly agreed that getting a grade gave them personal satisfaction with a much larger percentage than for the non-pianists.

- A larger proportion of the pianists either agree or strongly agree that exams help improve their playing.

(See Appendix 15 for details of the analysis of the student statements from the IFS).

The patterns emerging here indicate that examinations play a more significant role in learning for pianists, probably because there are fewer opportunities for them to play in other settings and to have their musicianship evaluated by other means. This may impact on the experience within lessons if assessment drives the teaching and learning. It may also indicate that the examinations hold higher stakes for pianists than for other instrumentalists.

7.3.6 Summary of quantitative findings

The findings in relation to examinations pose some contradictions. Although parents stated that the least important outcome for learning music was passing examinations, the data presented in Figure 7.7 indicate that the majority of parents considered the examinations as essential in the process. A possible explanation is that parents accepted the examinations as an integral part of the system; and while the initial objectives for enrolling their children involved broader educational objectives, they viewed the examinations as a means to measure progress. Another explanation may be the self-reporting aspect of the questionnaire; parents may not view themselves as ‘pushy’ parents, focused only on examinations. Some differences emerged between the attitudes of parents of pianists and non-pianists with regard to examinations which coincide with the findings in my IFS, and these will be explored further in Chapter 8. The qualitative elements of the questionnaires are discussed below and may shed further light on these issues.

7.4 Qualitative Findings

This section will examine the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire to parents. Some open questions were asked to enable parents expand their views and opinions.

7.4.1 Has the process lived up to your expectations?

Open questions were posed about whether the process of instrumental teaching and learning had lived up to parents' expectations. In general parents were positive about their children's learning experiences. 58% (n=55) of parents gave an unqualified positive response; 22% (n=21) gave a qualified positive response indicating some aspects that they would like improved; and 10.5% (n=10) indicated that the process had not met their expectations. 9.5 % (n=9) did not respond to this question.

7.4.1.1 *Parents who gave a positive response*

The high positive response is to be expected given that the students were still engaged in instrumental lessons, and might have dropped out had they not been satisfied. The student's enjoyment of the process was the most frequently cited reason for satisfaction (n= 17 parents mentioned this)¹³. The relationship with the teacher, and teacher traits, were also significant (n=11), and these aspects were often inter-related. Others emphasised non-musical outcomes such as self-confidence, self-concept, and finding an outlet for self-expression through music (n= 8). Many parents commented on their child's enjoyment of the learning process, and developing a love of music (n= 6), as indicated in the following statement:

*I wanted my child to learn the pleasure of music and not see learning as a chore ... and it has certainly done that [M83/flute/Grade 3/age 11]*¹⁴.

¹³ I am representing the number here and in the next sections, because it is a subset, and percentages may confuse.

¹⁴ M83 represents the student gender (M=male) and corresponding questionnaire number. Where the gender is not known, S for student is used. The instrument, grade and age of the student are also indicated.

Other parents were more specific, indicating that their child had developed musically, while at the same time advancing their independent learning skills and personal enjoyment from playing and experimenting. This pleasure extended to the family through hearing them play. In one case there was the added benefit of being able to take music as a subject for the Leaving Certificate examination. Many of these points are encapsulated in the following extract:

My daughter loves playing the piano and experiments with a lot of different styles of music such as jazz, songs from her favourite films etc. We all enjoy listening to her playing and she is doing music as a subject for her Leaving Cert [F13/piano/Grade 8/ age 17].

A parent of two girls identified transferable skills and referred to the structure and discipline that has led to this:

The structure and discipline learned in class has encouraged my girls to experiment during practice and my older child has worked out how to play both hands by ear on the piano [F31a and F31b/piano and violin/Grades 2 and prelim/ages 13 and 11].

These comments emphasise the importance of developing independent musical skills for increased enjoyment of playing an instrument.

The non-musical benefits of learning an instrument were mentioned by some parents, indicating increased self-confidence or self-concept:

He has grown greatly in self-confidence [M59/violin/Grade 1/age 10].

Yes one/one and competitions suited personality of child who was not into sport [M24/piano/Grade 8/age 18].

Parents commented on the positive characteristics of the teacher, emphasising the importance of the student-teacher relationship in the process of learning a musical instrument:

Relationship with teachers has been the single most important factor together with child's own interest and talent [F61/flute, piano and voice/Grades 7, 6 and 4/age 17].

The following statement includes a number of the issues mentioned above: boosting self-confidence, developing independent learning skills, teacher traits, and lessons being enjoyable:

Yes - encouraged and praised all the time. Boosts self-confidence and enjoys tinkering and figuring out pieces quite apart from what happens at lessons. Made learning enjoyable rather than a chore [M12/piano/Grade 2/age 12].

Other issues which featured strongly in the parents' comments related to the social aspects of playing. Some of these comments refer to the opportunity for playing in public and playing with others.

My boys have had great opportunity to play in public - this was not my experience [M84a and M84b/both piano/prelim and Grade 4/aged 10 and 13].

The following statement highlights the importance of ensemble playing for motivation.

The introduction of my child to playing in an ensemble was the greatest motivation to her. She now has her own aspirations [F85/violin/no grade indicated/age 9].

Those parents who felt that the process of learning an instrument was positive, emphasised that enjoyment, and increased educational, personal and social skills were important outcomes from learning music. These were often related to the students' ability to transfer skills, becoming independent learners, playing in ensembles, and playing in public for competitions or concerts (i.e. the *deep structure*). The role of the teacher in the process was emphasised by many, with enthusiasm and encouragement being important.

7.4.1.2 *Parents who gave a negative response*

The graded examinations, and teaching methods, were the primary sources of dissatisfaction for parents. Of the n=10 parents expressing dissatisfaction, n=6 explicitly referred to examinations. The following statement associates dropping out of music lessons with examinations:

It has been a disappointing experience for me as my son showed great promise but now he is desperate to give it up. I suspect the whole process of practising for exams has put him off [M25/piano/Grade 4/age 13].

Another parent referred to the pressure of the examinations and considered the system to be outdated:

I feel it is still old worldly. There should be a lot more fun in it. They are only kids. The last exam was nerve wracking for her. It was like the Leaving Cert. It was quite intimidating at the school [F37/violin/no grade indicated/age 11].

A parent who had a child attending the State music school emphasised the high stakes:

The whole year's learning is geared towards exams and keeping your place in the school [F38/violin, piano and voice; Grades 7, 6, and 1; age 18].

One parent found that her express wishes regarding examinations were ignored.

This parent had, herself, taken piano lessons and achieved Grade 8. She had sufficient experience of the graded examinations to make an informed choice for her child, but this was ignored by the teacher. She stated:

I expressed a preference for my daughter to be taught without an exam at the end of the year but my opinion was not taken into account [F:19/piano, guitar and violin/Grade 1/(no age provided)].

N=3 parents expressed dissatisfaction with teaching methods. The ‘unchanging cultural rituals’ associated with instrumental teaching (Rathgen, 2006, p.580), were evident even across generations:

I did piano 30 years ago and the method of teaching has not changed. This is disappointing [F55/piano/Grade 4/age14].

This comment is reminiscent of the ‘old worldly’ comment made by another parent above. In addition, there was evidence of pressure on students with the ‘tyrant teacher’ (Creech, 2006, p.374) still manifesting:

A little too intense. Teachers can get very cross if practice is not done. No enjoyment for them. Kids have enough pressures in school [F62/piano/Grade 3/age 14].

7.4.2 What would you change?

Parents were asked what they would change in the process of instrumental education.

N=62 parents responded to this question with suggestions for change, and n=15 explicitly stated that they were satisfied and would not suggest any changes. The responses were categorised, in the order of importance, as indicated by parents, as follows: group and ensemble, examinations, teaching methods, parental involvement, repertoire and enjoyment.

7.4.2.1 Group and ensemble

N=16 parents mentioned issues relating to group work, with most seeking more opportunities for group or ensemble work. The solitary nature of learning the piano was referred to by a number of parents:

The piano can be a solitary instrument to learn and is difficult to incorporate its use into social activities ... it would be nice to have more group (multi-instrument sessions) [F73/piano/prep/age 8].

The possibility for peer learning and experimentation in group settings was referred to by another parent:

It is nice to have smaller groups [as well as] individual sessions thereby allowing children to experiment more with different songs - encourage them to play more in front of others [S5/no details given].

Not everyone, however wanted this and a few parents stated explicitly that they were happy with individual lessons. Some parents felt that group classes would hold back more able students, which is in line with views expressed by some teachers. One parent whose child had a paired lesson felt that this had slowed progress because the ‘*other child's ability/progress [was] also a factor*’ [F67/piano/prep/age10].

7.4.2.2 Examinations

N=15 parents mentioned the examinations as an area that they would change. Some felt that ‘*the teachers can be caught up with exams*’ [F14/piano/Grade 1/age11], and there was ‘*too much exam pressure in some music schools*’ [F38/violin, piano and

voice/grades 7, 6, and 1/age 18]. The time spent on examination work to the exclusion of other aspects is reflected in the following comment:

I found the final term was too much focused on exam pieces. My child tired of her pieces [F85/violin/no grade indicated/age 9].

The pressure created by examinations was highlighted by another:

... there was tremendous pressure to achieve, especially around grade exams. This totally affected the pleasure and enjoyment of the instrument (M82a and M82b/ piano and guitar/Grades 4 and 2/ages 16 and 12).

7.4.2.3 Teaching and teacher's role

N=10 parents mentioned teaching strategies, and teachers' willingness or ability to adapt to students' needs. One parent found that the 'system' suited some children but not all:

the system seems to suit [this child]. However as with all teaching, steps need to be taken when the system doesn't suit the child for whatever reason. My other two children are more difficult to motivate. One has very strong feelings about exams and would rather develop a "social repertoire" of happy pieces! [F:15a, F15b and M15c/ all piano/Grades 4, 2 and 1; ages 13, 12 and 10].

It is implicit in this account that students were required to adapt to the 'system' rather than *vice versa*. The emphasis on product rather than process was highlighted by one parent who said '*More encouragement and praise for effort as opposed to performance*' [F29/piano/prep/age9]. The 'tyrant teacher' was also in evidence (Creech, 2006, p.374), leading one student to discontinue:

Teacher was very cross at times ... and she ran a mile from it and wouldn't continue it [F37/violin/no grade indicated/age11].

The very structured approach to teaching and learning in lessons also resulted in students' particular skills and interests not being responded to:

My son enjoys composing pieces and I would like if that had been incorporated into his instrumental lessons, and if more improvisatory skills were taught [M:80/piano and cello/Grades 6 and 2/age 15].

The limited scope for expanding the activities within the instrumental lesson is evident in this account. There appeared to be a very clear understanding of what should be taught in the instrumental lesson with little scope for deviating from this norm. The implications of this for teaching and learning will be further discussed in the final chapter.

7.4.2.4 *Communication and agency for parents*

The lack of communication with parents was highlighted by n=10 parents. Some parents felt distanced from their child's learning:

A little more communication between teacher and students' parents on how parent might help process would help particularly when the child is young [M68/guitar/no examination/age 8].

The lack of communication and information was evident at all levels of the process, including the critical stage of enrolling and selecting an instrument. In some instances, the control of this process was entirely out of the hands of the parent, who was not afforded any involvement. The following extract highlights this:

In the [State music school] ... there is no advice or support ... Some parents [who] had gone through the process knew the ropes and what to ask for. New parents didn't. It seemed that you nearly had to be a music teacher to understand their process ... No fair system and when I asked where she has come in her audition they wouldn't tell me. No transparency. I am a single mum working very hard to ensure my child had access to music. I found the process disheartening. There are no children from working class background using the [school] and certainly none getting to play an instrument. I asked to see their policies and wasn't given access. This is a publicly funded school. [F41/piano/no grade indicated; age 13].

Two important issues are raised here. Firstly, the lack of agency and advice for parents when selecting an instrument for their child. A high percentage of students in my study played piano. The primary motive for enrolling was 'to participate socially in music'; yet piano is the most solitary instrument. Parents and students need more advice at this critical stage so that they can make informed choices. Secondly, it may be the case that middle-class or 'high' (establishment) culture and values are being advanced

through the exclusion of other socio-economic groups. These are issues which will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

7.4.3 Repertoire and enjoyment

Parents were asked what kind of music they would like their children to learn. N=29 indicated that the most important thing was that their children played music that they enjoyed and would keep their interest. Most parents mentioned a few different genres, but classical music was the most often specified with n = 28 parents mentioning it. 'Pop' 'modern' or 'contemporary' combined were mentioned by n=27 parents. N=9 parents mentioned traditional music and n=6 mentioned jazz (see Appendix 20 for a Wordle representation of parents' choice of repertoire).

With regard to what parents would like changed, issues relating to repertoire were raised by n=8, and the importance of the process being enjoyable by n=7. These were often linked. One parent stated:

Would like to see more pop music or rock music available to learn. I think it would prove to be a greater incentive for my child to learn [M34a, M34B and M34c/all piano/Grades 3, 1 and beginner/ages 12, 10 and 8].

The issue of student choice was another issue raised:

Perhaps the child could have a little more input into the pieces they learn and thereby develop their own musical taste [F16a, M16b and F16c/piano all/Grades 3, 1 and prep/ages 14, 12 and 9].

7.4.4 Reasons for discontinuing

Parents were asked to indicate if any of their other children had discontinued with instrumental lessons. N=23 parents indicated that they had. The reasons given were varied; lack of interest was the main reason (n=6). N=5 indicated it was because of the teacher, with the tyrant teacher being evident:

Finished piano due to teacher expecting her to fail exam (she got merit). Had personality clash as she doesn't suffer time-wasters. Piano teacher has since realised her mistake and apologised to her [S64/ no details].

N = 4 indicated that it was because of the transition to secondary school, and n=2 because of sport, and these were all boys. This may indicate an implicit lack of encouragement for music in some boys' schools. One parent stated:

He does not see music as one of his predominant hobbies for secondary school. None of his pals play. Too shy to play outside environment [P.5/no details].

Pressure from the graded examinations was indicated by n=3, and pressure of schoolwork was given by n=2. For some however, all was not lost, and n=7 indicated that they had returned to lessons having changed instruments or teachers, and others continued as autodidacts, learning new instruments or continuing to play on their original instrument.

7.4.5 Summary of the findings from parents

The findings concur with Campbell's (1991) view that parents enrol their children 'with the hope of developing a certain "well-roundedness" in their children' (p.277). A key issue for parents was enjoyment, and they wanted their children to play music that would hold their interest. The parents' primary aspiration was that their children would be able to participate socially in music, and many parents would like to have more group participation in music. 77% of parents considered that the annual examinations were important to mark their child's progress, although some felt that they negatively impacted on what is being learnt and how it is being learnt. All of the actors (teachers, examiners, parents and students) were in agreement that the examinations were important.

There are some tensions in the findings. Aside from the strong indication that parents considered examinations to be very important for teaching and learning, there was little evidence of the 'pushy parent'. Yet some teachers felt pressure from parents for success at examinations, and there was evidence that this impacted on teaching and learning. There was a lack of communication between the schools, teachers and parents

and some evidence of ‘ambivalence towards parents and pupils individuality’ (Creech, 2006, p.92). This may have led to a perceived lack of agency on the part of parents, and consequentially, examination feedback and results provided reassurance for parents in the form of concrete evidence of their investment. Parents may also be ‘buying in’ to the system, especially when they do not have any prior knowledge of it themselves, and the graded examinations are systemic. Raymond referred to his own progression from beginner to professional as follows: *‘this is the best way that people do it so that’s the way I’m going to do it’*. In the absence of advice and direction, parents may also assume that the prevailing structures are the most appropriate, relying on the professionals for direction.

7.5 Findings from the Student Focus Group

This section returns to the students and the data which emerged from their focus group. I have selected accounts which articulate themes raised in the previous chapters, but through the voice of the students. Alexander (2008, p.9) states that ‘to discover and devise appropriate mediation [in education] we need to engage with and listen to children, not just talk at them’. The findings will be presented as a series of ‘vignettes’ in an attempt to provide a ‘thick’ description of the students’ experiences. Each vignette has been selected to exemplify key issues which have emerged from the data in previous chapters, but are presented from the experience and perspectives of the students.

Vignette 1: The Twins – Signature Pedagogy

Siobhan and Leanne are identical twins, aged 14, high achievers at school and they have completed Grade 3 in piano. Their main hobby is horse-riding, and they look after ponies in their spare time. They want to discontinue their piano lessons. The following exchanges shed some light on why they are dissatisfied with their lessons. The actions of the teacher indicate an unwillingness to deviate from a ritualistic approach to teaching, despite the possibilities presented by having twins who could learn *and practise* together.

- Researcher: *Did you have your lessons together?*
Siobhan: *Well one of us would do homework while the other was having the lesson.*
Researcher: *Did the teacher ever take you together at the same time?*
Leanne: *No.*
Siobhan: *Yea. Well, you know coming up to the exams, for the ear tests and stuff like that.*
Leanne: *Oh yea.*
Researcher: *And did you ever do duets?*
Siobhan: *Not really.*
Leanne: *We did a few but they were really simple (makes a face).*
Researcher: *And did you learn the same or different pieces?*
Leanne: *Well we did different ones sometimes but you had to do some the same for the exams.*

The following exchange indicates that examination pressure came from both the teacher and parent. Prior to the focus group, Siobhan and Leanne's mother had said to me that she wanted them to do examinations '*because if they decided to give up, at least they'd have something to show for it*'.

- Researcher: *Did your teacher give you a choice of music?*
Joey: *Yea, she always gave a choice. She played a few from the book (gestured turning pages) and then you could choose.*
Researcher: *And you could bring in your own pieces and play them?*
Siobhan: (emphatically) *No no. We could never do that.*
Researcher: *But did you play music you liked?*
Siobhan: *No, it was all exam focused. We did Grade 3 in November, and when we had that done Mom and the teacher said we should do another one ... some time, when was it?*
Leanne: *In May.*
Researcher: *You mean in the same year, straight after you had done Grade 3?*
Siobhan: *Yea. But we didn't do it ... I didn't like having such a short time. I knew I couldn't do it. Like we have ponies at home and they have to be looked after and we have loads of homework and stuff.*
Leanne: *I think there's too many exams. Our teacher always wants us to do them, and Mom thinks they're good for us.*

Siobhan and Leanne's experience of instrumental lessons was very much confined to the *surface structure* of learning, and they had little opportunity to progress to the *deep structure* where they could transfer their skills and act as musicians (Shulman, 2005). Despite the obvious opportunity to learn together and develop ensemble through duets, their lessons continued to be one-to-one, even though the other was still in the room. There was no effort made to link their music activities to interests outside of the lesson. They did not get any say in the music they played, although they did download music themselves and had obviously developed some independent skills. They had discontinued music as a subject at school. Unlike Karen's experience (detailed in Vignette 3), where she got to play at school, the twins had no opportunity to perform at school, or to bring their acquired skills and knowledge into the classroom.

Vignette 2: Mairéad – Musical Identity

Mairéad is a serious, earnest 11 year old. A high achiever at school, she has attained good results in her piano examinations up to Grade 2 and was a prize-winner in an under-age piano competition. She is positive about all aspects of her instrumental lessons. The following exchange indicates a lack of connection between her instrumental lessons and her involvement in music outside of the lessons:

- Researcher: *So do you get to play pieces you know?*
Mairéad: *Well I figure them out. I pick out my choir pieces and sometimes I play at choir practice ... (nervous laugh under her breath) but that doesn't count.*
Researcher: *What do you mean – that doesn't count?*
Mairéad: *Well, it's just the children's church choir ... it's got nothing to do with my lessons.*
Researcher: *But do you actually play piano with the choir?*
Mairéad: *Keyboard - yea, we got a new leader last year and she lets me play. So I figure out the pieces myself and play them – sometimes.*
Researcher: *Can you think of an example?*
Mairéad: (pauses, gets embarrassed and blushes) *Oh sorry, I just can't think right now. But at Christmas I played.*
Researcher: *And did you get help from your piano teacher?*
Mairéad: *No. It's nothing really – it's just casual (getting quite flustered).*
Researcher: *Well it's great that you can bring your music into the community.*
Mairéad: *I suppose – (looks like she wished the conversation had never started).*

Musical identity and the 'possible future self' (Hallam, 2006, p.146) have been identified as being important for students' sustained motivation and participation in music education (Bloom, 1985). Although Mairéad was acting as a 'real musician', demonstrating an ability to apply transferable musical skills (i.e. *deep structure*), her comment 'that doesn't count' indicates a disconnect between her lessons and her involvement with the choir. In Chapter 5, I argued that *deep structure* participation was critical in the teachers' accounts of their own learning. Participation at this level however, happens by chance. There appears to be a lack of integration between music activities beyond the instrumental lesson, with teachers taking little responsibility for, or interest in, students' musical activities and interests outside of the lesson.

Vignette 3: Karen - Specialised Futures

Karen is 18 years old, and has just done her Leaving Certificate examination (LC) for which she took Music as a subject. She intends to study Business Information Systems at university. She has completed Grade 6 in piano, Grade 7 in flute, and performed with a flute ensemble as part of her LC Music examination – an experience she hugely enjoyed. Karen is very positive about her experiences as a music student. Her flute teacher was ‘fantastic’ and she played in the school orchestra for the show each year.

I have selected the following extract to highlight two issues: the uncertainty about her musical future now that she has left school, and the strong classification of genre within her instrumental learning.

- Karen: *I'd love to play ... traditional music. My friends play in traditional groups and they have great fun. I'm not sure what instrument though. Violin or accordion or something.*
- Researcher: *What about traditional flute since you play the flute already?*
- Karen: *Yea maybe, (looks uncertain, as if she had never considered this) but I don't know anyone who plays traditional flute ...*
- Researcher: *So will you continue to play now you've finished school?*
- Karen: *Well I've done Grade 7, so I'd like to finish. Do Grade 8.*

It was surprising that Karen, who was a competent flute player, had played in school orchestras and ensembles, and enjoyed the social aspects of playing, did not realise that her skills might be transferable to traditional Irish music. To her, the obvious route was to ‘finish’ by doing Grade 8, indicating the progression towards ‘specialised futures’ provided by the graded examinations.

Given the cultural, social and community advantages of playing traditional music in Ireland (not least at university), it was disappointing that Karen had not received guidance, or that her aspirations in this direction had not been recognised or realised by her teachers. This indicates the routine nature of instrumental instruction and ‘strong classification’ in relation to learning, which focuses primarily on playing classical music.

Vignette 4: Darren - Attrition

Darren is 16 years old. Having achieved Grade 3, he discontinued violin lessons at age 13 when he progressed to secondary school. Before the focus group, his mother told me *'he dropped out because it wasn't "cool" – it's as simple as that'*. Following the focus group, I consider this an oversimplification. The following extracts indicate that many factors contributed to Darren discontinuing.

Darren stated that he *'knew his own mind'* regarding decisions about his participation in music lessons, including selecting the instrument. However his own aspirations were not always realised. He wanted to play double bass, but had to settle for violin.

Researcher: *So it was your choice [to play violin]?*

Darren: *Yea, I liked the look of it. There was someone a year ahead of me playing the double bass. When we played at concerts and for the Confirmation and things, it always sounded ... better when he [double bass] was playing. I'd have liked that, but I'm not sure why I ended up with the violin.*

In the 'stimulus' questionnaire distributed at the start of the focus group, Darren wrote he *'didn't feel it [music education] would benefit my future'* as a reason for discontinuing (see Appendix 17). This triggered the following encounter:

Darren: *Yes, well I had loads to do ... homework – well not in primary [school], but I had GAA¹⁵ and soccer training and matches and it was hard to fit it in. I wasn't really interested in it. I didn't think it was going to do me any good in my future.*

Researcher: *Is that why you gave up?*

Darren: *I gave up when I was going to secondary school ... A few of my friends were learning, but they had all given up by then.*

From this excerpt and the next, it could be surmised that peer interests may also be a factor. In the following exchange involving Darren and his brother Joey, there appears to be an implicit lack of value placed on music at their all-boys secondary school.

¹⁵ The Gaelic Athletic Association is a sporting association, very prevalent throughout Ireland, where members play Gaelic football and hurling.

Researcher: *Can you do music at school?*
 Darren: *No, they don't do it.*
 Researcher: *Was that a reason for giving up?*
 Darren: *No, I'd have given up anyway.*
 Researcher: *Do any boys in your school play music?*
 Darren: *No.*
 Researcher: *Not even in bands or anything?*
 Darren: *I don't know any.*
 Joey: *There's a guy a year behind me and he plays in a band.*
 Researcher: *A rock band?*
 Joey: (looking a bit vague) *It's the banjo. D'you know him?* (addressing Darren)
 Darren: *The guy in second year ... what's his name? – yea he's supposed to be good. It's the banjo I'd say.*

The following exchange highlights possible reasons for discontinuing:

Researcher: *Someone said it's not cool. Would that have been a reason for giving up?*
 Darren: *No, that was not a reason at all* (emphatically). *If I had wanted to do it, I would have.*
 Researcher: *So it wasn't to do with friends?*
 Darren: *No I made up my own mind. But I had too much to do. And I'd lost interest. I didn't really like it.*
 Researcher: *And why do you think that was?*
 Darren: *I didn't like the music ... My teacher was very strict if you didn't have something done ... And it was always exams. I didn't get a chance to play stuff I know.*

Taking into account all of the issues raised by Darren, it was evident that he was not set up for success, and multiple reasons may have contributed to his discontinuing lessons. Although he wanted to do double bass, he had to settle for violin. His teacher was strict; he often did not get to play music he liked, and the learning was examination focused. There was no opportunity for him to study music at his new secondary school, and there was an implicit lack of value in playing music at the school. Darren did not see playing music as being part of his future; he was involved in several different sports, and together with homework, there were competing pressures on his time. Although he says that peer pressure was not an issue, all of his friends had given up at this stage. Taking into account all of these factors, it would have been difficult for a 13 year old (as he was when he discontinued) to withstand all of these pressures.

7.6 Conclusions

This chapter presented the views of the parents whose children were engaged in instrumental tuition, and examined the experiences of a small number of students taking instrumental lessons. Parents reported that they enrolled their children for altruistic reasons, to provide them with a well-rounded education. The primary reason for enrolling their children in instrumental lessons was to enable them to participate socially in music. Yet almost two-thirds of the parents had children enrolled for piano lessons, which is quite a solitary experience. Another contradiction emerged in relation to parents' desired outcomes from instrumental lessons. The most highly rated outcome was to develop creative skills, but the account emerging was that lessons did not promote original creativity, with a focus being on faithful reproduction of music presented through the medium of music texts. In the questionnaires the parents indicated that the graded examinations were important to provide a sense of achievement for their children, to provide motivation and to provide an independent appraisal of their child's progress. Some considered that the examinations put too much pressure on their children, although many did not agree with this.

The student vignettes were selected to 'explode' (Mac an Ghaill, 2011) certain themes which were emerging from the data, and to provide some rich description of how these aspects were experienced by students. The experience of twins, Leanne and Siobhán, signalled that their teacher did not deviate from routine practices within lesson, despite the opportunities presented by them both being present in the room during the lesson.

Mairéad's experience indicated that there was a disconnect between her lessons and her participation in music within her community. She dismissed her experience of playing keyboard with the choir as 'not important', and was unaware of how important

it could be for her development and self-image as a musician – this may have been because it was not assessed, and her piano teacher had no knowledge of this participation.

Karen, who was a competent flautist, having achieved Grade 7, wanted to play a traditional instrument for social reasons, but had never considered that her skills might be transferable to traditional flute playing. She envisaged herself taking up another instrument to participate in traditional Irish music. On the other hand she wanted to ‘finish’ her flute playing by doing Grade 8.

Finally, although Darren’s mother had said he dropped out of lessons because it “wasn’t cool”, it would appear that several reasons may have contributed to his decision to drop-out. Firstly he did not enjoy much of the music he played for examinations (his mother said he loved playing for Christmas concerts etc. and he said enjoyed being able to play music he liked). His teacher was ‘cross’ when he had not practised. All his friends had discontinued learning instruments, and there was no opportunity to pursue music as a subject at his secondary school. In fact, there appeared to be little interest in music at the school. Finally, he was highly involved in sports, and he had lost interest in music. He summed it up by stating that ‘*it was not beneficial for my future*’.

Many factors contributed to students’ satisfaction or dissatisfaction when learning music. The indications were that those involved in *deep structure* participation experienced greater satisfaction, as this involved a social dimension. Parents were largely satisfied with the processes, but it has to be noted that they represented students who were still taking lessons. There was general consensus that the social aspects were important for parents as well as children, although the choices in selecting an instrument did not reflect this. I suggest that outcomes and satisfaction could be increased if both parents and children’s views were taken into account when selecting an instrument.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusions

Fascinating Laboratory or Deviant Tradition?

Beyond the confines of professional schools, there are other deviant traditions of education for practice ... perhaps most important, there are the conservatories of music and dance and the studios of the visual arts. The artistry of painters, sculptors, musicians, dancers and designers bears a strong family resemblance to the artistry of extraordinary lawyers, physicians, managers, and teachers. It is no accident that professionals often refer to the “art” of teaching or management and use the term artist to refer to practitioners unusually adept at handling situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict (Schön, 1987, p.16).

8.1 Introduction

For Schön (1987) the ‘deviant traditions’ represented practices in professional preparation which he considered distinctive and unique. Amongst the settings he studied was the master class in musical performance where he observed ‘education for professional artistry’ (1987, p.173). Schön’s view was that professional preparation, outside of these ‘deviant traditions’, had remained rooted in ‘technical rationality’ which stemmed from a positivist philosophy (p.3). In positivist models, problems are solved through the application of systematic scientific knowledge. This he called the ‘high, hard ground’ of ‘research-based theory and technique’ (Schön, 1987, p.3). He contrasted this with the ‘swampy lowlands’ where ‘messy confusing problems’ arise

(p.3), which require professionals to be ‘adept at handling situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict’ (p.16). Thus, Schön (1987) recognised the music conservatoire as a deviant tradition within professional education.

My focus in this study is not, of course, on professional preparation, but on the instrumental education of the potentially competent or talented child or adult. It is my contention that Key Signature Pedagogy is a ‘deviant tradition’ – not only in the realm of professional preparation as Schön proposed – but deviant within the discourse of general *education*. The Key Signature Pedagogy outlined in my study has remained on the high ground of technical rationality, fixed and ‘pre-packaged’ for transmission and assessment, through highly defined structures and systems. General teacher preparation, on the other hand, recognises that practitioners must be adaptable and reflective, and prepared to deal with messy confusing problems, and ‘situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict’ (Schön, 1987, p.16).

This chapter will present a summary of the findings of my study in light of the research questions. A discussion of some of the central issues which arise from these findings will follow. The chapter will conclude with a proposal for a new model of Key Signature Pedagogy. The thesis will conclude with an outline of the key contributions of my study, a discussion on the limitations of the study and proposals for possible future research.

8.1.1 Addressing the research questions (RQs)

In this chapter I will revisit and respond directly to the RQs, namely:

1. What is the signature pedagogy for instrumental education in Ireland, and what does it look like in practice?
2. What is the role of assessment in shaping this pedagogy, and how is the graded examination system perceived by the various stakeholders?

3. How does this signature pedagogy coincide (or not) with the aspirations and expectations of the different social actors (students, teachers, parents and examiners) engaged in this process?

In addressing RQ1, I will present the Key Signature Pedagogy for instrumental music in Ireland as a high ground ‘performance’ model (Bernstein, 1996, p. 55) (see Figure 8.1). This schema will be based around Shulman’s framework for signature pedagogy, which is constituted of *surface*, *deep* and *implicit* structures. Later in the chapter, I will discuss the institutional and hegemonic influences which have formed and maintained the *status quo* for instrumental education in Ireland over many decades.

Responding to RQ2, I will explore the impact of the graded examination system on Key Signature Pedagogy, along with the implications of this high stakes system for teacher agency, instrumental teacher preparation, and teaching, learning and assessment in instrumental music. The issue of performativity (Koopman, 2005) in the context of instrumental teaching and learning will be discussed.

In addressing RQ3, it is important to note that aspects of this question are also implicitly explored in RQ1 and RQ2. In particular I will examine if the current ‘performance’ model of the Key Signature Pedagogy and the assessment system (see Figure 8.1) can deliver on parents’ and students aspirations and expectations. I will propose an alternative ‘competence’ model for the Key Signature Pedagogy (Bernstein, 1996, p.55) (see Figure 8.2) where instrumental teachers could act as *adaptive* practitioners in the ‘indeterminate ... zones of practice’ of the 21st Century (Schön, 1987, p.3). Such a model would strengthen the partnership between the different actors, and provide critical links for students, potentially bridging the different social and cultural milieu of their personal and musical lives.

8.2 Summary of the Research Findings

8.2.1 Key Signature Pedagogy in Ireland

This research has examined the signature pedagogy of instrumental music in Ireland, and I have called this a Key Signature Pedagogy. I have argued that the *implicit structure* or ‘hidden curriculum’ (Shulman, 2005, p.55) of music teaching in Ireland has been largely dominated by the inherited cultural and social values, traditions and rituals of Western art music. Thus a Key Signature Pedagogy was situated in a practice dominated by professional institutions (the PRF), rather than official institutions of education (the ORF) (Bernstein, 1996). This has resulted in ‘strong classification’ within the profession, with minimum interaction, influence or integration with other disciplines and institutions. Consequently cultural and social systems within the field of music teaching practice, which have been reinforced and legitimised over time, have remained largely constant and static. In practice, the objectives of the professional bodies (conservatoires and examination boards), which focused on the paradigm of the virtuoso musician as the objectivised specialist future, have been at the heart of this pedagogy (Spruce, 2002).

Students and teachers report experiencing the *surface structure* as a highly systematised, controlled and prescriptive process. ‘Lesson mechanics’, which promote a componential rather than holistic approach to learning, often dominated as teachers implemented routine practices (Daniel, 2003, p.11). The lesson mechanics involved components such as scales, sight-reading, aural tests and playing repertoire – the learning of which was usually approached as a sight-reading exercise. Other components, such as theory or musicianship were often taught in separate classes. Creative and transferable skills such as improvisation and composition were rarely mentioned by the participants, and some teachers did not mention these at all (see the

Wordle representation of a teacher's interview (Orla) in Appendix 19). The student was expected to adapt to the system and individuality was often not accommodated.

Participation in *deep structure* activities, such as orchestras, ensembles, concerts, competitions, performances at school, or within the community, provided additional motivation. This motivation came from opportunities to socialise through interaction with other 'like-minded individuals', enhancing confidence and self-esteem (Hallam, 2010, p.10). I have argued that outcomes were improved for those who participated at a *deep structure* level and that participation at this level can be critical for success and perseverance in instrumental education.

Pianists had fewer opportunities to participate at a *deep structure* level than other instrumentalists. Many pianists reported experiencing playing the piano as a very solitary experience. Some pianists found *deep structure* activities by other means, such as participating in choirs or musicals, which did not involve playing their instrument. Pianists were confined to solo performance in concerts, competitions and examinations, which could be stressful when compared to performing in a group.

Deep structure participation was arbitrary, and there was little connexion between the *surface* and *deep structures*. Students were rarely supported in the transfer or application of their skills to new contexts. It was reported that teachers had little involvement with their students' musical lives outside of the instrumental lesson and it appeared that the responsibility for initiating participation at a *deep structure* level lay with the student. Because of this, the formal teaching and learning often did not transfer or extend beyond the confines of the instrumental lesson and examination settings.

8.2.2 The impact of the graded examination system

The examination system, which involves primarily solo examinations, focused almost exclusively on assessing the *surface structure*. Thus, the activities of the *deep structure* remain largely un-assessed in a formal sense. This may be a consequence of the expediency of implementing a ‘portable’ system of assessment, whereby components are more easily assessed. In consequence, the processes of teaching, learning and assessment were thus dominated by the *implicit structure*, i.e. the institutions which regulate or frame instrumental education.

A surprising finding was that a majority of the participant groups from the IFS and RBT (teachers, examiners, parents and students) considered the annual graded examinations to be important for instrumental learning. Although some participants were critical of the processes involved in the examinations, most considered them an essential part of the process for accreditation, motivation and accountability. It was evident that the examinations held very high stakes for teachers and students, even for examiners, and some conflicts of interests and contradictions emerged.

Parents, almost uniformly, expressed altruistic reasons for wanting their children to participate in examinations. It is likely, however, that parents also used the examinations as a means of evaluating their investment in the lessons. Some parents expressed a lack of understanding of the processes involved in instrumental tuition, and the examinations may have provided concrete affirmation that learning was taking place. On the other hand, lessons dominated by ‘lesson mechanics’ could be dull and less than stimulating for students. In my earlier research (O’Sullivan, 2010) I found that the repertoire played for examinations did not correspond with students’ preferred listening tastes, and consequently this could be de-motivating for students.

Teachers believed that parents measured their professionalism by means of examination results. Furthermore, examination results had a bearing on their self-

concept as teachers. Some teachers questioned the fact that one examiner was responsible for the outcomes of the examination, believing that this meant there was much subjectivity in the process. The fact that all instruments and genres were examined by one examiner at any sitting (regardless of that examiner's specialty) was questioned. Some teachers were fearful that the adjudication of an examiner could impact on how their professionalism was perceived, which in turn would have consequences for their livelihoods.

The examiners were advised, by the examination boards, not to report anything in their feed-back to students which could be damaging to teachers. As a result of this, some examiners felt that their own standards could be compromised. The stakes were so high that one examiner reported feeling fearful when she went to examine in certain locations, and two examiners reported teachers '*listening at the door*'! Two examiners reported being complained of to the Board when the teachers did not like the results.

In some state music schools where there was a conservatoire ethos, a student's place was dependent on maintaining high marks in the examinations. Such an approach could be damaging to students if they perceived that they had failed. All of this points to a highly performative system with competing interests needing to be served. In such a system it is likely that educational and musical objectives could be lost.

Pianists and their parents considered the examinations to be more important for learning and motivation, than did other instrumentalists and their parents. Parents of non-pianists rated 'playing with others' and 'playing at school' to be more highly motivating than the parents of pianists, which is reflective of the solitary nature of playing piano. The examinations therefore had higher stakes for pianists than for other instrumentalists, thus increasing the pressures on the '*poor piano student*' (Declan), an issue that will be further discussed below.

8.2.3 Parents' and students' aspirations and expectations

Parents generally reported enrolling their children in instrumental lessons to provide a well-rounded education (Campbell, 1991). There was little explicit evidence of the 'pushy parent', but parents did buy into an element of performativity when it came to the graded examinations. Some parents claimed that there was too much focus on the graded examinations, and that the resulting pedagogical practices and processes were 'old worldly'.

A contradiction emerged between the parents' objectives for enrolling their children in lessons and the reality experienced by students. The primary reason given for enrolling their children was 'to participate socially in music' and the most important outcome was expressed as to 'develop creative skills'. Yet, almost two-thirds of parents had a child playing piano, which provided little opportunity to participate socially in music. There was little evidence of the possibility for original 'creativity' in terms of improvisation and composing. Communication between parents and teachers was not always strong or clearly formalised. Parents were frequently not well advised or informed at the critical stage of selecting an instrument for their child. The parents views were elicited at this critical stage and advice given based on their objectives for enrolling their children in music lessons, they might make different choices. At the very least they would enter the process with more awareness of what the expectations and outcomes would be for their child.

The findings indicate that piano students experience Key Signature Pedagogy quite differently to other instrumental students. Declan's description of the young piano student practising 'facing the wall' paints a rather grim picture of the experience. For pianists, performance at concerts or competitions is still a solo activity, and consequently may be very daunting, even overwhelming for many. In addition, the

findings indicate that there was more examination pressure exerted on pianists from all sides (parents, teachers and the students themselves).

The vignettes of the students' experiences, presented in Chapter 7, enabled a picture to emerge of how some of the issues mentioned above impact on practice. The students who were most satisfied with their instrumental lessons were those who were engaged in '*deep structure*' participation through playing with others. Karen, for example, did not feel any pressure when performing for the high stakes Leaving Certificate examination, because she was performing with others. The opportunity to act as an accompanist for her church choir gave Mairéad great satisfaction. However, she did not consider this as central to her musical education, because her teacher was unaware of this activity and no links were made between the activities inside and outside of the lesson.

Those who were unhappy with the process had very little connection between their lessons and their musical interests outside the lesson. The experience of twins, Siobhan and Leanne, indicated strict adherence to formulaic piano lessons, even with the opportunity presented by having two children of the same age and interests attending lessons and practising together. There was considerable pressure exerted to do examinations by both their teacher and their mother. This pressure had the negative impact of the twins becoming bored, discontented and demotivated. This may also indicate that although parents express altruistic views in relation to examinations and do not perceive themselves as 'pushy', in practice the reality may be different.

Darren's experience indicated the lack of connection on many levels between his instrumental lessons and other aspects of his life. He reported his violin lessons as being dull and examination oriented. There was little interest in playing an instrument amongst his peer group, nor was there any support at his all-boys school. Other

interests, such as playing sport, had put demands on his time and '*he did not feel it [music] would benefit me in my future*'. What I am suggesting here, therefore, is that there needs to be a more considered approach to instrumental education where connections are made between the instrumental lesson and the lives of students.

8.2.4 A model of Key Signature Pedagogy

Before discussing the implications of the findings, Figure 8.1 (below) presents a model of Key Signature Pedagogy that emerges from this study, outlining the different structures and how these lead to different outcomes. This model suggests a 'top down' control of instrumental teaching and learning. The *implicit structure* influences the activities within the other structures. The *surface structure* is filtered by the demands of the assessment system, and consequently is given prominence as it is perceived to meet the high stakes objectives of the *implicit structure*. On the other hand, *deep structure* activities are not formally assessed (although I do acknowledge that they are informally evaluated by different audiences), consequently the *deep structure* is not formalised within the instrumental education system in Ireland. However, those students who participate in the *deep structure* often have better outcomes. Having summarised the findings of the study, sections 8.3 through to 8.6 will discuss various issues arising.

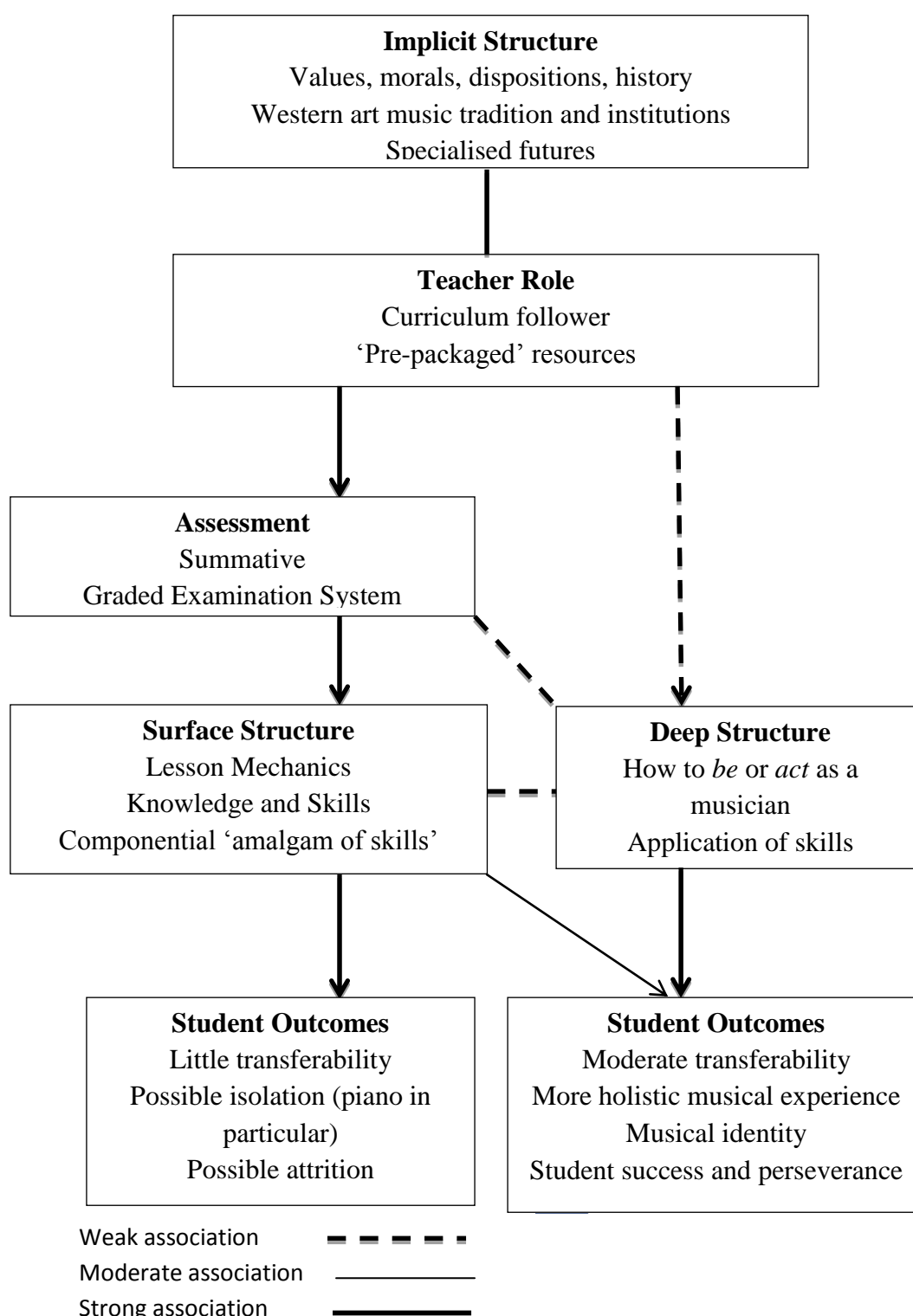


Figure 8.1: *Model of Key Signature Pedagogy*

8.3 Key Signature Pedagogy, Assessment and Performativity

Figure 8.1 shows a model that is dominated by the *implicit structure* i.e. a discourse influenced by the institutions (conservatoires and examination boards) which regulate instrumental education. It has already been stated that the graded examination systems (for example the ABRSM) were established with a view to improving standards amongst applicants for places to the colleges of music (ABRSM, 2010), and not necessarily with the general music student in mind. The system exerted a strong influence on what was taught and how it was taught, with the inclusion of certain skills and the omission of others. The objectives were clearly set out, with high stakes for all participants. This in turn may have led to the perpetuation of performativity in practices for both teachers and students. This discourse of performativity is often unquestioned in instrumental education, as will be discussed below.

8.3.1 Performativity in instrumental music

Performativity refers to the drive for goals to be achieved in ever more efficient ways (Koopman, 2005). Consequently completion and perfection, as well as measurement, increasingly drive educational agendas which demand accountability and efficiency from teachers and programmes (Koopman, 2005; Brophy, 2008). These objectives fit with Bernstein's (1996) 'performance' model, and with those of the graded examination system which dominates instrumental tuition. Ball (2003) refers to the 'terrors of performativity' (p.215), which has led teachers to take assessment as their starting point in planning teaching and learning.

The divide in music education, discussed in Chapter 1, and further elaborated upon in Chapter 3, is also referred to by Fautley (2010) in relation to assessment. He describes two different modes for music learning, one for 'learning in the music class'

and one for 'learning to play an instrument' (p.115). Learning to play an instrument involves the following elements:

Gd V theory (*sic.*), Reviewing & Evaluating skills (implicit), Aural Skills, [and] Instrument Specific Skills (Fautley, 2010, p.115),

which over time lead to 'Instrumental Proficiency' (*ibid*).

Learning in the general music class involves:

Composing Skills, Performing Skills, Listening Skills, Reviewing and Evaluating Skills, Musical Knowledge, Personal Learning & Thinking Skills, Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning (Fautley, 2010, p.115),

which over time lead to 'Musical Understanding' (*ibid*). Fautley claims that '[t]here is a clear difference in emphasis between the two, with learning to play an instrument *having a specific outcome in terms of its end goal*' (*ibid*, my emphasis).

In my view, this is a problematic distinction. Fautley's dual modality indicates a very narrow construct for learning to play a musical instrument. The pre-conceived objective for the instrumental student is 'instrumental proficiency', whereas 'musical understanding' is the outcome for the classroom music student. It should surely be explicit that 'musical understanding' is a necessary outcome for any type of musical activity, especially learning to play a musical instrument. The duality between instrumental and classroom music largely corresponds with Bernstein's 'performance' and 'competence' models, leading to dichotomies in all aspects of teaching and learning between these two modes as follows: componential versus holistic; performativity versus evaluation; training versus education; product versus process; reproductive versus creative; discipline centred versus learner-centred; reductive versus expansive; Western art music versus other musical genres.

The objectives of parents in my study, for enrolling their children in instrumental lessons reflect those outlined by Fautley (2010) for learning in *classroom* music. It is likely that many parents (and children) are unaware of the narrow focus of

instrumental lessons, and consequently may be disappointed with the outcomes. I would argue that the philosophy and objectives for instrumental education should be reconsidered by the profession, as called for by Hallam & Creech (2010):

educators need to ... redefine the aims of tuition and what are considered to be successful learning outcomes and develop more flexible approaches to pedagogy appropriate for particular genres, instruments, the aspirations of learners, and the opportunities available for long-term participation in making music (p.85).

Within the current system, it would still appear that the ‘servant [assessment] has taken control of the master [musical learning]’ (Fautley, 2010, p.201).

In this research and in my previous research (O’Sullivan, 2010), the various stakeholders in music education expressed the view that assessment is important in the process of teaching and learning music. It was evident however that, in many cases, the current graded examination system was driving the teaching and learning with some negative consequences. This suggests a need to re-evaluate the objectives for facilitating a broad musical education through instrumental learning, and designing appropriate assessment criteria to meet and support these. As previously indicated, the pace of change has been very slow in the field of instrumental education. The following sections will examine some of the possible blocks, or ‘professional myopia’ (Jones, 2007, p.3) which have impeded the pace of change.

8.4 Hegemony and Instrumental Education

In responding to RQ1, it was evident that many teachers unquestioningly accepted the *status quo* in relation to Key Signature Pedagogy, with one or two notable exceptions. There was considerable insularity in the sector, with societal or educational changes over the past decades seemingly having had little impact on practice. This section will return to the concept of hegemony discussed in Chapter 2, as a possible explanation for this insularity or ‘strong classification’ (Bernstein, 1996, p.10). It will discuss how the

dominant discourse is being challenged, as evidenced in the views of Declan, and how wider societal opinion is changing attitudes in relation to the value of current practices.

8.4.1 Views on hegemony

Hegemony explains how people are brought to accept what is familiar, unwittingly participating in processes without being fully aware of any wider institutional or ideological influences (Smith, 2002; Boyton, 2006). In my study, the participants or actors were participating in a system where seemingly obvious deviations from practice were not considered or facilitated. Examples of lost learning opportunities included the twins having separate lessons while the other was in the room. Or the fact that Katie did not realise that her skills could be transferable to playing traditional Irish music.

The notion of reification of abstract concepts, such as musical ability, was discussed in Chapter 2 (Green, 2003). These abstract concepts, sedimented down in the history of instrumental teaching, have shored up hegemonic practice in the instrumental lesson. The examination system legitimated and extended this phenomenon. In consequence, students frequently personify or commodify their musical ability stating “I am Grade 4” or “I have Grade 4” (O’Sullivan, 2010). Such statements carry explicit meaning in terms of the specific tasks, skills and repertoire they can perform. Aspects of music performance tend to be split into tangible and measurable components, such as sight-reading, improvisation, aural training, technique, musicianship. By these means, the process of instrumental education has become reified (Green, 2003) and pre-packaged (Bernstein, 1996) to provide a ‘portable system for the certification of music skills’ (Boyton, 2006, p.94). This process has enabled a particular ideology and a set of social relations to be perpetuated and institutionalised, hence hegemonised. These ‘trans- or extra-local ruling relations’ (Smith, 2002, p.21) – in instrumental music, the relationship between the professional bodies and the different actors – find their way

‘into the actual sites of people’s living’ where they are normalised and become unquestioned, routine, everyday happenings (*ibid.*). In this way, teachers, parents, examiners and students unwittingly participate in, and maintain, the existing ideological values of instrumental education (Boyton, 2006).

8.4.2 Waning cultural capital

These dominant values stem perhaps from the way in which classical music has been socially and culturally positioned over time. Spruce (2001) provides a historical account of how the practice of music shifted away from being a ‘collective, social activity’ involving all citizens in rites and rituals from the church to the streets. After the Industrial Revolution, physical access became restricted to members of the aristocracy and ‘an affluent middle class eager to identify with the established aristocracy’ (Spruce, 2001, p.119). The roots of an *élitist* tradition, and consequent associations with social mobility for later generations (as described by Boyton & Kok, 2006), may stem from here.

There is, however, some evidence that the cultural capital gained through instrumental education is waning. Wright & Finney (2010) argue that while

it is still true that it is predominantly middle class children who have instrumental tuition ... the images that society is mirroring to them concerning the worth and status of holding this form of cultural capital are changing (Wright & Finney, 2010, p.228).

They point to a new middle class, which values the culture of celebrity, stating ‘[in] Tony Blair’s “cool Britannia” ... playing rock guitar carried more cachet for most than going to the opera’ (Wright & Finney, 2010, p.229). A shift in cultural values is also evident in Ireland, where, for example, playing in a traditional Irish music “session”

now carries as much cachet¹⁶, and is probably considered more “craic” than playing in an orchestra¹⁷.

In my study Declan commented on this shift in cultural values, and the repercussions for the instrumental teaching profession. In the following comments, he recognises that music teacher colleges need to take up the challenge of preparing future teachers for this change:

... the genres are breaking down ... the privileged position of classical music ... is becoming much fuzzier in peoples' minds ... And with the growth of popular music schools, the learners and their families will vote with their feet ... I would look at what's happening in teacher preparation in the colleges. That penny has to drop with the teachers coming up [Declan:int/142].

Bernstein argues that whoever controls the pedagogical device ‘has the power to regulate consciousness’ (1996, p.52). He states that when a discourse moves or shifts, it creates a space for new ideology to play. It could be argued that the enormous technological developments, the proliferation of and instantaneous access to all genres of music, may provide the space for discourses around instrumental education to shift and new ideologies to emerge. However, the drive for change will have to come from within the profession if the profession is to stay relevant and not become a dinosaur or relic in the eyes of the general public. This will be largely dependent on teacher agency and teacher preparation, and these will be discussed in the following sections.

8.5 Teacher Agency

In my study, teachers expressed differing levels of agency in their practice. Some teachers were explicitly satisfied with the *status quo* and did not question current practices (Orla, Ingrid, Lara, Raymond and Betty). Others felt that they had considerable agency and autonomy within their own teaching practice (Declan and

¹⁶ A ‘session’ is a gathering of Irish traditional musicians who come together to play, often in informal settings.

¹⁷ ‘Craic’ is a word used widely in Ireland to represent fun, enjoyment and sociability.

Rita). Still others indicated that institutional practices curtailed their ability to effect change and had a negative effect on aspects of their practice (Lena and Katia).

In a study of teacher agency, Priestley *et al.*, (2012) take a centrist view, (from the extremes of individualistic and socially determined concepts of agency), where there are differing levels of voluntarism and determinism. They define agency as follows:

Agency is a matter of personal capacity to act, combined with the contingencies of the environment within which such action occurs. Further an individual may exercise more or less agency at various times in different settings (Priestley *et al.*, 2012, p.197).

They propose that agency is impacted upon by aspects of the agents' past, future and present. 'Iterational' elements represent past professional, educational or personal experiences; 'projective' elements are the 'future imaginings' including outcomes such as examinations or student progression; and 'practical evaluative' elements represent the normative aspects of current pedagogical practice as they exist at any given time (Priestley *et al.*, 2012, p.197).

In Key Signature Pedagogy, I would consider the 'iterational' elements to be the teachers' own learning biographies as students, teachers and professional musicians. 'Projective' elements or 'future imaginings', such as specialised futures and graded examinations, impact on practices at instrumental lessons. Finally, the teachers' own professional and teacher preparation, and the contexts where they teach, influence the 'practical evaluative' elements or normative pedagogical practices in the particular field. The cumulative impact of these different elements merge to reduce teachers' agency. This calls to mind the dichotomy expressed by Mills (2006) who abandoned her 'creative experiment' when she moved from the classroom context to the instrumental lesson. Teachers may, in different contexts and with different experiences of professional preparation, have more agency and be more spontaneous or creative.

It was argued in Chapter 5, that differences in teachers' views could not be accounted for by their educational levels alone. Of the four teachers who were at doctorate level, two expressed conservative views, and two held more progressive views. The conservative viewpoints came from those researching in the field of musicology and the more progressive views from those engaging with education research. The differing levels of teacher agency may, therefore, be artefacts of other iterational factors such as the *quality* or *nature* of their educational and professional experiences. Giddens expressed the view that:

agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently (2008, p.9).

It might be posited that, because of their experiences as musicians and students (iterational factors), the teachers continued to implement the customs and rituals of their own learning. It is equally possible, that their teacher preparation did not equip them to consider or employ alternative practices. In terms of projective or future imaginings, 'specialised futures' and attainment in graded examinations, which were institutionally espoused in the ecology of the cultural practice, were the prevalent objectives.

Agency was greatest where the teachers had engaged with general educational theory, and Rita and Declan were the most vociferous in questioning current practices.

Declan did however, acknowledge that

private teachers [are] vulnerable to the market place ... very often their professional opinion isn't regarded, there's a lot of other pressures on them [Declan/int:191].

Another concern is the issue of 'wash-out effect'. This is a phenomenon where student teachers are worn down by the 'system' in schools and leave aside their newly acquired ideas about education (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Katia, who had a post-graduate teaching qualification (as opposed to a Diploma from one of the professional

bodies) did perceive a clash between her professional objectives and those of the culture in which she was working. She was struggling to reconcile providing a learner-centred approach in her practice, with what she perceived to be the pressures of an attainment culture within the profession. Her isolation was evident in that she worked alone, often in people's homes, and consequently was answerable primarily to parents, who took the graded examination system as the measure of their children's attainment *and* her professionalism. She did not perceive that she could effect change, and the 'wash-out effect', in terms of the subjugation of her newly formed ideas and indeed her enthusiasm and idealism, was evident.

The impact of the professional and educational biographies of teachers has been highlighted as a factor in determining teacher practices and teacher agency. It has also been argued that different approaches to teacher preparation by professional and academic institutions may provide an explanation for divergent practices and levels of teacher agency. This has obvious implications for teacher preparation in the area of instrumental education, which will be discussed in the following section.

8.6 Implications for Teacher Education in Instrumental Music

Classroom practices and career trajectories will change dramatically during the lifetime of any newly qualified teacher. Teachers working in mainstream primary and secondary education are required to be reflective practitioners, with adaptable competences to deal with the uncertain, unique and conflicting situations that they encounter in their careers (Schön, 1987). In learner-centred education, the focus is on learning and differentiated teaching strategies, and teachers are required to be curriculum *makers* rather than *followers* of curriculum. Wiliam (2011) states that:

Trying to change students' classroom experience through changes in curriculum is very difficult. A bad curriculum well taught is invariably a better experience for students than a good curriculum badly taught: pedagogy trumps curriculum.

Or more precisely pedagogy is curriculum, because what matters is how things are taught, rather than what is taught (2011, p.19).

There is some debate as to whether music teacher education should become more generalised, or whether teachers should become increasingly specialised in their own fields (Cutietta, 2007). Music undergraduates come to college with very high levels of musical skills and most music teachers will have been schooled in the classical-conservatoire tradition. The issue of whether teachers view themselves primarily as teachers or musicians has already been explored in Chapter 2. The findings from this study suggest that this professional disposition may be a factor of the teachers' preparation.

The examination boards provide teacher qualifications for professional musicians, but these focus on the development of musical skills, rather than on general pedagogical theory. An exploration of the syllabi of the major UK and Irish examination boards, in respect of their teacher preparation and certification, indicates strong similarities. The vocational aspects of the ABRSM teacher education programmes are emphasised in the following statement:

While the assessment components (especially at LRSM and FRSM levels) include educational theory and philosophy, curriculum studies and aspects of educational administration, the focus throughout this subject-line is the teaching of music as a practical activity (ABRSM, 2011a, p.3).

The syllabus focuses on the candidate's musical skills, and on specific aspects of teaching the instrument. The assessment process, including teaching practice, is entirely summative, with candidates submitting written work in the form of a portfolio and a video of a lesson, in addition to a performance on the chosen instrument. The perpetuation of performativity in the teaching process is evident in the following statement, where the candidate is recommended to present, not only their own certification, but also that of their pupils:

Wherever possible, your application form should be supported by documentary evidence, such as copies of certificates, details of module/course content, samples of marked work, or pupils' examination results (ABRSM, 2011a, p.24).

Candidates prepare for these examinations independently, based on a set syllabus, and the assessment is standardised whether it takes place in Ireland or Malaysia. Prospective teachers undergoing this process do not have the opportunity to evolve their skills as curriculum makers, but follow a very prescriptive approach. Teacher preparation is therefore focused on promulgating the values and syllabi of the professional bodies.

A significant part of the armoury of teacher preparation programmes is the reflective port-folio or process-folio. Novice teachers develop their skills by undergoing a detailed process of planning, involving the formulation of long-term and short-term objectives, schemes and lesson plans, and reflective self-evaluation of their classroom practice, leading to constructive forward action. This is all conducted under the stewardship of experienced mentors and supervisors. By contrast, there is a lack of 'prelesson production of elaborate teaching plans' in the instrumental teaching context (Kennell, 2002, p.251), and in its place are 'pre-packaged' method books and examination syllabi. This was very evident from the data in my study, where some teachers chose repertoire from an examination syllabus, even when not required to do so.

Gaunt (2006) has highlighted a number of problems in the preparation of instrumental teachers at an *élite* conservatoire. She found that between the teacher and student:

[t]he intensity and privacy of the relationship resembled the intimacy of personal or therapeutic relationships more than conventional teaching/learning relationships; [but] there were none of the structures of training and supervision here, which professionalise therapy (Gaunt, 2006, p.154).

She commented on the high level of isolation between teachers and the wider learning community, with teachers developing idiosyncratic and individualistic approaches (a finding also supported by Lennon, 1996). In her research she found that teachers focused on subject knowledge, technical skill and musical expression, with the assumption that students would develop independent learning skills ‘as a matter of course’ (Gaunt, 2006, p.156). Gaunt concluded by highlighting the necessity for musicians to consider themselves *educators* as well as musicians, and called for teacher preparation involving ‘reflective practice, action research, co-mentoring, and portfolios of professional development’ (p.312).

The need for instrumental teacher preparation to focus on pedagogy has been identified by many authors (Lennon, 1996; Gaunt, 2006). According to Popham (2008), the quality of teachers is the single most important factor in the education system. This viewpoint was also expressed by some of the parents in my study, who considered teacher quality to be one of the most critical factors in their children’s continued engagement and success. The converse was evident in some of the testimonies of the students, whose teachers failed to adapt their instructional practices to meet the needs of their students.

I have already referred to new developments in instrumental education provision which have been concurrent with this research. In Ireland, these new developments are represented by the Music Generation Programme which I outlined in Chapter 1. This comes in the wave of other international projects such as *El Sistema* in Venezuela and *Sistema Scotland*. The scope of this research does not allow for a detailed study of these developments, but it is important to acknowledge, after decades of stagnation in Ireland, that things are suddenly moving quite quickly in particular pockets of music education. These relatively new music education projects are concerned with social inclusion and

providing a learner-centred, inclusive music education. Their philosophies take account of the whole child, providing ‘supportive relationships’ and aiming to build self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging (Scottish Government, 2011, p.9). The approach to teaching is holistic, with children learning about ‘mutual responsibility, respect and achieving things individually and as part of a wider, co-operating group’ (Scottish Government, 2011, p.10). This change in thinking about instrumental education will require that teacher preparation is reconsidered so that teachers are able to adapt to and facilitate these developments. In the following section I will propose a new framework for instrumental education, based on the findings of my study.

8.7 Proposing a new model for Key Signature Pedagogy

Since the commencement of my study, a number of very different schemes of instrumental education have been established in the UK and Ireland, which indicate that the tide is changing and which present possible alternative models. I will look at a few of these, and will propose a theoretical schema, based on Bernstein’s competence model, which might underpin instrumental music teaching and learning. It is important that the change does not happen only in pockets, but that all teachers of instrumental music are educated to look beyond their own training to ensure that they meet the needs of their students. It is implicit, that if a student wishes to follow a classical conservatoire approach, they can do so. However, should the student’s interests take another direction, this should also be catered for.

8.7.1 Music Generation (Ireland)

In Chapter 1, I mentioned the ‘Music Generation’ project which was established in Ireland in 2010, and which aims to expand the availability of instrumental education to children right around the country. Although still early days, the scheme is having an impact in the geographical areas where it is established, and is highlighting new

possibilities for instrumental education. The new schemes and initiatives reflect a more expansive pedagogy for instrumental education, although this is determined locally and dependent on the views of local practitioners and managers. There is currently no research available to measure its impact, but Music Generation has launched a research project in conjunction with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (one of the mainstream primary teacher education colleges in Ireland) to track its progress. Such collaboration indicates the possibility that classification is weakening, and that instrumental education may benefit from coming under the influence of broader educational thinking.

8.7.2 *Sistema* Scotland

Sistema Scotland was established in 2008 and is based on the successful *El Sistema* in Venezuela. The objective is to provide quality instrumental education for children who might not otherwise receive it for social or economic reasons. A critical part of the philosophy of this scheme is taking into account the whole child, providing 'supportive relationships' and aiming to build self-esteem, confidence and most importantly, a sense of belonging. From the outset, the approach is holistic and immersive, and children participate as part of a group through orchestra, consequently learning about 'mutual responsibility, respect and achieving things individually and as part of a wider, co-operating group' (<http://makeabignoise.org.uk>). As well as group participation, children receive a short individual lesson each week.

Sistema Scotland state that providing 'appropriate structure' and the 'opportunity to belong' are critical for positive outcomes in music education. The approach here could be considered to bring together the *surface structure* and the *deep structure* of the signature pedagogy, where students are actually *acting* as musicians from the earliest stages, but being supported in that process.

8.7.3 ABRSM Music Medals System of Assessment

A new type of pedagogy requires a new type of assessment *for* and *of* learning. There have been some developments in assessment practices in the past decade. A system of assessment for students who learn in groups, called the Medals System, has been introduced by the ABRSM. The innovative aspect of this is that the assessment is carried out by the teacher, and performances are submitted electronically to the ABRSM for moderation. The system remains prescriptive in terms of the curriculum and there is some danger that it may appear to be somewhat inferior to the established graded examination system. One testimonial from a teacher bears this out:

The most important thing to realise is that Medals are not *instead* of graded exams. At some point, most teachers will want to move their pupils on to graded exams but the decision to do that is with the teacher (ABRSM, 2013).

8.7.4 Competence Model for Instrumental Education

Figure 8.2 proposes an alternative model based on Bernstein's competence model, taking into account some of the new trends in music education. In this 'new' model the *implicit structure* is directed by the needs of the child (not the discipline), in collaboration with his family, and takes into account his community, culture and interests. The *implicit structure* for this model recognises that instrumental music does not belong in the 'high, hard ground' of 'technical rationality' (Schön, 1987). Rather, it belongs in the 'swampy lowlands' (p.3) which take into account different social and cultural interests, and varying abilities. Teaching and learning is differentiated to meet the needs, experience and interests of the student. The teacher is a curriculum maker and the learning process reflects more of a collaborative partnership between all the actors. The *surface* and *deep structures* overlap and both are underpinned and supported by appropriate assessment mechanisms with an emphasis on process rather than product.

This alternative model will build on the philosophies such as those of *El Sistema* and the Music Generation models which recognise the totality of the experience of

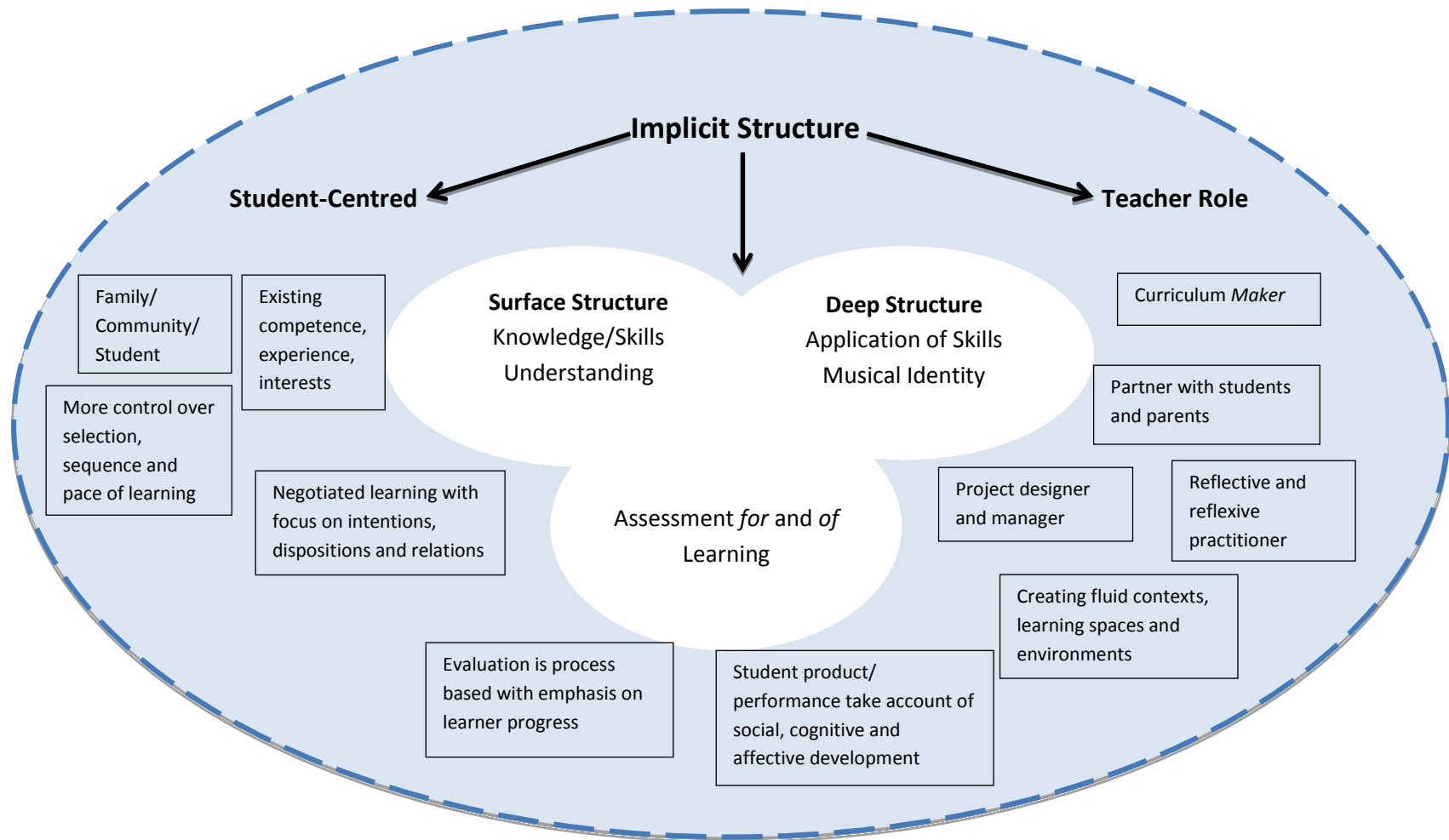
participating in music and the ‘opportunity to belong’. The need for relationships and social contact is natural and life-enhancing, and music is an ideal way to develop these contacts. The impact of the student-teacher-parent relationship in instrumental music has been discussed in chapter 2 (Creech, 2003, 2006). Little research had been done in terms of peer learning in instrumental education, because the activity has been carried out mainly in a one-to-one setting.

This proposed schema should involve teachers working with parents to establish the child’s cultural interests, determining shared objectives with the child and family. Pupils should have a voice in their own musical activities, negotiating their learning to facilitate choice of repertoire, and the skills to become independent musicians. In particular, teachers should form links and partnerships with schools and community organisations and be aware of the students’ activities and opportunities as musicians beyond the music lesson and within the local community.

Teachers will need to expand on their own skills and constantly evolve as musicians themselves to cater for their students’ interests. They will need to remain current in relation to their knowledge of contemporary musical interests, and adapt and arrange music for their students.

Teachers will need to develop skills in group instrumental teaching and consider restructuring their delivery to encompass group-work. They should consider redesigning their studios to incorporate and employ the electronic tools which are widely used by young people for their own musical interests. Space-saving electronic keyboards make it possible for even small studios to have a number of instruments so that piano lessons need no longer be a solitary activity. To summarise, instrumental teacher should view themselves as project managers capable of designing musical learning projects to cater for the various needs of their pupils in a changing world.

Figure 8.2: *Competence Model for Key Signature Pedagogy*



8.8 Contribution of my Research

Most previous research in instrumental education in Ireland has been undertaken with the objective of advocating for wider State provision, and consequently has focused primarily on access (Heneghan, 2001; Music Network, 2003; Thompson, 2009). Because of the lack of research, much of the available literature is related to instrumental learning in the UK and beyond. I took the view that there are particular issues in the Irish context, both historical and cultural, to warrant examining instrumental education explicitly within that particular social and cultural context. While certain aspects may be common to different jurisdictions, it is important to consider the debates in the light of developments within Ireland. From what I have argued in this chapter, I will summarise the key contributions of my research in the following paragraphs.

My study provides empirical data from a range of stakeholders participating in instrumental education in Ireland. In that sense, it presents a broad sweep of opinions and perspectives. The data enable a rich snap-shot of instrumental teaching and learning in Ireland at a pivotal time for the profession.

Bernstein's theory in relation to pedagogical fields was applied to problematise the phenomenon of insularity which emerged. I found that Key Signature Pedagogy has many of the characteristics of Bernstein's 'performance' model of education. This model is highly prescriptive, with a focus on the discipline and on conveying pre-packaged sets of skills (Bernstein, 1996). A model for Key Signature Pedagogy as it currently exists was presented in Figure 8.1.

My findings have implications for practice in the field. The data indicate that there can be a disconnect between the *surface* and *deep structures* in instrumental education. The concern for *surface structure* elements is driven by the need to fulfil a

highly prescriptive examination system. Yet participation at *deep structure* level is highly significant for satisfaction, perseverance and self-concept as a musician.

My study has important implications for teacher preparation in instrumental music. The data suggest that the nature of teacher preparation has an impact on the views of teachers and on how they carry out their practice. The focus in teacher preparation has been on ‘music teacher education’ rather than ‘teacher education in music’ (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010). Music teacher education programmes often focus on the technical aspects of teaching music, with the discipline, rather than the student, as the central focus. ‘Teacher education in music’, on the other hand, implies an emphasis on general educational and pedagogical theory.

The views of parents and the experiences of students indicate some disparity between their expressed expectations and aspirations, and the reality that is experienced. It was found that activities at instrumental lessons are often unrelated to or disconnected from the students’ musical or personal lives outside of the lessons. This suggests a need for collective engagement with students, parents and the wider community to advance the interests of instrumental students.

Finally, a framework for instrumental education is proposed in Figure 8.2. This framework is more compatible with recent developments in instrumental education. Being non-prescriptive, it is adaptable to take account of the local social, community and cultural interests of students and their families, and this model could be flexible over time.

8.8.1 Areas for further research

There have been several calls for more research in instrumental education (Daniel, 2006; Triantafyllaki, 2005). Researching the ‘black-box’ (Rostvall, 2003, p.214) of the instrumental music lesson remains problematic, in that investigating the dyadic teacher-

student relationship can be considered intrusive. I would suggest that collaborative small-scale action research involving the primary actors in the process may overcome some fears, with teachers and their students having more agency and input into the research process. In this section I identify areas for further research.

Firstly, further research is required on parents' and students' objectives for electing to take up instrumental tuition, and on how these objectives correspond with actual outcomes from playing different instruments. Such research could result in better accommodation in meeting the desired objectives of students and their parents, and lower the attrition rates in instrumental music.

Secondly, more research is required into how students of different instruments experience Key Signature Pedagogy. The isolation felt by pianists was a recurring theme, and this needs to be addressed for improved outcomes in piano playing. The possibility of utilising electronic keyboards for group tuition opens up possibilities for pianists. The 'stigma of past generations that group teaching is not first-class teaching and has limited value' (Daniel, 2004, p.4) needs to change, and the efficacy of individual versus group tuition should be explored.

The area of teacher preparation for instrumental teaching is critical to bring about changes in pedagogical practices. Alternative teaching strategies, and teacher adaptability, will be required to meet the demands of the new music education projects which are emerging. New approaches to teaching and learning which involve more group teaching should be explored.

As the 'newcomers' to instrumental music education come more to the fore, further research should take place into how their cultures and practices could be incorporated in mainstream instrumental teaching and learning. In particular, in the Irish context, the practices in formal and informal learning in traditional Irish music could be explored as young students are becoming more excited and engaged in the tradition.

8.8.2 Limitations of this study

Many researchers have indicated that access to teachers and students for the purposes of research in instrumental music is problematic (Daniel, 2004; Gaunt, 2006). This study is limited in terms of its generalisability because it is relatively small-scale. I selected the participating schools based on the likelihood of gaining access, and although care was taken to be representative, the sample is selective as outlined in Chapter 4.

I did consider that video recording lessons might have provided more substantial data. However, the one-to-one setting leads to strong relationships between teachers and students, and such research may intrude on this implicit trust or bond. There was also the possibility that the presence of a video might alter the interactions as the actors are conscious of being observed. On a practical level, I felt that access and consent would be difficult to obtain in many settings for such activity. The questionnaire provided some valuable data, and the open questions enabled the parents to elaborate their views. However, some conflicting views did emerge, and it may be that questionnaires were limited in terms of explaining the complexity of the views expressed.

A problem for this study was the limited research available into the practice of instrumental education in Ireland. Because of the formal settings selected for this study, certain areas are under-represented – such as traditional Irish music. Traditional Irish music continues to be taught in more informal settings, and consequently the views of teachers in this area are absent. A criticism that might be levelled is that the research attempts to cover too much ground. This again was a factor of the limited research available in the Irish context, and the absence of a clear picture of pedagogy in practice from which to build. It would have been inappropriate to make assumptions without having an overview of what Key Signature Pedagogy looked like in Ireland. I considered it necessary, therefore, to establish this base before progressing to examine other research questions.

8.9 Being Critically Reflective About This Research

At the outset of this research I outlined my own personal and professional biography as a student, a parent, a musician, a teacher, and a teacher educator. Unlike many musicians of my generation, I did not have a conservatoire education. Undoubtedly these experiences have shaped my views. This research brought me in contact with colleagues who had very different experiences of music education, consequently diverse perspectives have emerged. During the process I was humbled and heartened by the enormous dedication on the part of the participants to their students and their profession. I did attempt to represent their views as openly and honestly as possible.

Coffey states that insiders can bring some 'esoteric knowledge and an empathetic self' (1999, p.33) to the research process. They bring a shared understanding of language and texts, and can facilitate wider credibility and acceptance in the research context. However, the opportunity for misrepresentation of one's colleagues, or nuancing the interpretation of data towards one's own assumptions and values, are among the risks of researching within one's own field. I have described some of the steps taken to avoid this in Chapter 4, which include triangulation and member checks. On the other hand, having a different learning experience may have opened me to some esoteric or alternative ideas during my professional life and during this research.

In respect of my own professional practice, engaging with the wider community as a researcher has provided insights which I would not otherwise have had. It was illuminating to encounter views that were contrary to my own. For example, the widespread importance placed on the graded examination system by different stakeholders came as a surprise. I realise that it will be necessary to constitute change carefully to ensure that appropriate structures remain in place to support the participants in instrumental teaching and learning.

A significant factor in my own personal development was being able to problematise issues which have concerned and puzzled me for many years. Encountering Basil Bernstein's theories provided some of the most memorable light-bulb moments during this research process. His work has enabled me to comprehend the institutional impact on the 'everyday/everynight of our contemporary living' (Smith, 2002, p.19) as well as on my professional life. This insight has broadened my understanding of the wider issues in relation to music education, and will enable me to make a contribution to these debates.

8.10 On That Note ...

Most people are attracted to music; they have instant access to music at all times through technology, and have sound-tracks to their lives. Their engagement with and interest in music are likely to vary or change as they go through life. Music education therefore provides a fascination for many. Regelski (2007) described how young children react experimentally when they realise they can get a sound from a piano, but some years later we find the same child dutifully slogging through scales, Czerny, Hanon, and learning to read the musical notation of dead, white, male composers (Regelski, 2007, p.28).

Gould (2005) argues that the reasons for studying music 'are embodied in/by our students. These reasons are as varied as they and we are' (2005, p.37). This supports the view that the most 'effective music education ... adds value to individual lives and enlivens society' (Regelski, 2007, p.22). It is time, therefore, for instrumental education to relinquish its 'deviant tradition' status, which pays homage to 'dead, white, male composers' and become more mainstream within the discourse of education. I will leave the final words to Declan, who poses a simple, appropriate and succinct question for instrumental teachers:

'What is the musical experience that's right for the child?'

CODA

MENDING Music Education

How can we know the dancer from the dance?

(Yeats, from *Among School Children*, 1928)

It was with some trepidation that on November 1st 2013, during the final days of editing this thesis, I took time out to attend the 3rd Annual Conference of the Society for Music Education in Ireland (SMEI). The conference, “Legacies, Conversations, Aspirations”, was themed to look back at MEND as evidenced by a keynote address entitled ‘MENDING Music Education’ (Ó Súilleabháin, 2013). Because MEND was my starting point, I considered that this conference could affirm my research, but equally could throw up any glaring omissions. I have already mentioned my concern that developments in instrumental education might have overtaken my research. I came away from the conference confident that this research will indeed contribute to the ‘jigsaw’ that is ‘performance music education’¹⁸ in Ireland (Molloy *et al*, 2013).

The conference reported significant developments in relation to access and social inclusion, specifically through the Music Generation (MG) programme. The range of genres and pedagogical approaches, as evidenced by students performing TradRap, has not previously been experienced in music education within Ireland. MG is engaged in extensive self-evaluation, and identified issues relating to quality amongst its primary challenges going forward. MG will not have full penetration throughout the country (twelve Music Education Partnerships are planned in the medium term), consequently much tuition will remain within the instrumental/vocal teaching

¹⁸ ‘Performance music education’ was viewed as a global term for performance in all music education settings, and ‘instrumental/vocal teaching’ was viewed as specifically relating to the one-to-one, small group context where my research was situated (Lennon, 2013).

community on whom my research is focused. The changing landscape of instrumental education will present many challenges for this community and my research foreshadows some of those challenges.

An account of recent research in instrumental education by Mary Lennon confirmed that most is still emanating from the UK and beyond, while much of the research within Ireland has remained focused on access (Lennon, 2013). Consequently my research will extend the knowledge of practice and epistemology within Ireland.

Finally, a keynote address, delivered by the inspirational Prof. Keith Swanwick, affirmed many of the issues discussed in this thesis. Acknowledging that the paradigm of Western classical traditions still lurks within formal music education, he spoke of the ‘creative muddle’ that is music education. His view is that there are multiple pathways to music, some open, some closed. Critically however, all paths must lead to musical understanding, which he defines as ‘what is left when the activity is over – what we bring to the next time’ (Swanwick, 2013, SMEI keynote address). He places the student at the centre of the learning and musical process. Just as one cannot separate the dancer from the dance, neither can one determine what will emerge at the interface of the student and the music.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire to Parents

APPENDIX 2: Cover Letter with Parents' Questionnaire

APPENDIX 3: Aide- Mémoire for Teachers' Interviews

APPENDIX 4: Aide- Mémoire for Interviews with Teacher/Examiners

APPENDIX 5: Sample of Original Transcript from Teacher Interview with Raymond

APPENDIX 6: Sample of Coding - Declan / Signature Pedagogy Excerpt

APPENDIX 7: Sample of Coding - Rita / Assessment Excerpt

APPENDIX 8: Coding, Classification and Data Selection

APPENDIX 9: Colour Coding Qualitative Material from the Parents' Questionnaire

APPENDIX 10: Letter to Principals for Permission to Interview Teachers

APPENDIX 11: Information Sheet to Teacher Participants in Interviews

APPENDIX 12: Letter Granting Ethical Approval

APPENDIX 13: Diary Samples

APPENDIX 14: Conference Paper

APPENDIX 15: Student Data from the IFS

APPENDIX 16: Statistical Information on Parent Questionnaire Items

APPENDIX 17: Stimulus Material for the Student Focus Group

APPENDIX 18: Parental Consent Form

APPENDIX 19: Wordle Representation of Orla's Interview

APPENDIX 20: Wordle Representation of Parents' Choice of Genre

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire to Parents

Questionnaire for Parents

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This questionnaire is anonymous and you need not supply your child's name. The questionnaire will take 10-12 minutes to complete. If you have more than one child, please fill it in, in respect of the child who is currently learning and the most advanced.

Section 1: Your children's personal details

Child's Age	Gender	Instrument(s)	Last grade	Currently learning
				Yes/No
				Yes/No
				Yes/No

Section 2: Your views on instrumental teaching and learning

Why did you enrol your child for music lessons?	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
<i>I enrolled my child in music lessons because</i>					
It was available at his/her school					
S/he expressed an interest in taking lessons					
Music is as important as other subjects					
Music is as important as sport					
I took music lessons and wanted the same opportunity for my child					
I did not have the opportunity but wanted to give my child the chance					
I want my child to be able to participate socially in music					
I want to give them career options					
Doing music exams will be beneficial for them					
Learning music will help him/her develop academically					
S/he showed signs of musical talent					
Musical talent is in the family					
His/her friends were doing it and s/he wanted to also					
His/her siblings were doing it so s/he wanted to					
Other (please specify)					

Please number these statements from 1 to 10 <u>in order of importance</u> for you (1 = MOST important and 10 = LEAST important)	Number in order of importance
<i>Through learning music I would like my child to</i>	
Be able to play/join in at parties or sessions	
Be able to play in an orchestra or group	
Pass exam grades	
Get a broad education	
Develop his/her creative skills	
Develop his/her social skills	
Be able to do music as a subject for Junior/Leaving Cert	
Increase his/her self-confidence	
Play purely for his/her personal enjoyment	
Improve his/her concentration or academic skills	

How do you rate the importance of the following skills for learning music?	Highly important	Important	Don't know	Not very important	Not at all important
	1	2	3	4	5
Sight-reading					
Playing by ear					
Music theory					
Playing with others					
Being able to perform in public					
Creating/composing music or songs					
Improvising					
Figuring out tunes/pieces for him/herself					
Performing repertoire					

How do you rate the following performance situations for motivating your child?	Highly important	Important	Not available to my child	Not very important	Not at all important
	1	2	3	4	5
Playing for Christmas concerts					
Playing for competitions					
Playing for exams					
Playing at his/her own school					
Playing with others (orchestra/ensemble/band)					
Playing for his/her own enjoyment					
Playing for family					

Please indicate your opinion on music exams in the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Graded exams provide an essential independent appraisal of my child's progress					
Exams provide motivation for practice					
My child enjoys music exams					
The exams place too much pressure on my child					
Exams are important for learning classical music					
My child enjoys the repertoire he/she plays for exams					
The exam repertoire is limited					
Exams are important for learning scales, sight-reading, ear tests etc					
Passing exams gives my child a sense of achievement					
My child should be motivated to play without exams					
Annual exams are important to mark my child's progress					

Please indicate your opinion on the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>I would allow my child to discontinue lessons</i>	1	2	3	4	5
If s/he showed no sign of progress					
If s/he was not enjoying it					
If s/he had too much homework					
If s/he showed more interest in other activities					
If s/he was not practicing					
If s/he did not do well at exams					
If s/he was good but showed no interest					
I would always encourage my child to continue					

Please indicate your opinion on the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Music is more important for girls than boys					
Certain instruments are more suited to boys or girls					
It is easy to motivate my child to practise					
My child practises more when s/he likes the piece					
My child practises more coming up to exams					
My child practises more for concerts/competitions					
Group classes might be more enjoyable for learning music					
Individual lessons are very important for learning music					
I am very involved in my child's music lessons/practice					

What style of music are you most interested in your child learning?
Has the process of instrumental music teaching and learning lived up to your expectations? Please explain below.
Please indicate if there are aspects of the process of teaching and learning instrumental music that you would like to see changed.
If you have a child who has discontinued, please indicate the primary reasons.

Please turn over for final section

Section 3: (Your own music background/interests)

1. Do you play a musical instrument or sing? Yes / No.

2. Did you ever take instrumental lessons? Yes / No.

3. If yes to either of the above, what instrument(s)?_____

For how many years did you learn? _____

4. Did you ever do a grade? Yes / No. If yes, what was the last grade?_____

5. Do you still play? Yes / No.

6. In the following grid, please outline your musical activities.

How often do you ...	Every day	1-2 times a week	1-2 times a month	2-3 times a year	Never
Listen to music on the radio					
Go to concerts					
Choose to listen to classical music					
Choose to listen to traditional music					
Choose to listen to popular music					
Choose to listen to jazz music					
Play an instrument/sing for your own pleasure					
Sing in a choir/play in an orchestra/band/ensemble					
Other music interests (please explain)					

Thank you so much for your time!

APPENDIX 2: Cover Letter with Parents' Questionnaire

Dear Parent,

Enclosed is a questionnaire for parents of instrumental music students, which is being distributed as part of a research project being undertaken for a Doctorate in Education programme (Ed.D) at King's College London. The researcher is Kay O'Sullivan, a former principal of CCMC, who has a long association with the College. The Board of CCMC has sanctioned the research at the College following consultation with the researcher. This stage of the research is one of a many-faceted approach being carried out at a number of participating music schools.

We would like to stress that your participation is entirely voluntary. The questionnaires are anonymous, the information will be strictly confidential, and there will be no way of identifying individual responses. Further details of the project are included in the attached Information Sheet, and it has undergone rigorous ethical consideration by the Ethics Committee of King's College London.

In the interests of the students and clients of CCMC, the following arrangements have been made to ensure data protection and anonymity.

1. All envelopes have been addressed in-house in CCMC and the data or personal information of our students have not been shared with any third party.
2. A stamped, addressed envelope has been included to enable respondents return their information in confidence.
3. Every effort has been taken to ensure that students or clients cannot be identified.
4. All the costs of the research have been borne by the researcher.

At a time of considerable transformation in the field of education, not least because of technological advances, the area of instrumental teaching and learning remains relatively under-researched. The Board considers that this research could ultimately benefit and inform processes of teaching and learning music. Details of the findings will be made available to the College and could provide valuable feed-back for CCMC on parents' views. On that basis, we would welcome your input to this research.

Yours sincerely,



Principal

APPENDIX 3: Aide Mémoire for Teachers' Interviews

Aide -Mémoire for Interview with Music Teachers

Indicative Topics:

Key research questions: Is there a signature pedagogy for instrumental music education? If so, what does it look like in practice and what factors are driving it?

1. Tell me a bit about your own early music education.
2. Can you describe your own instrumental lessons? What format did they take?
3. What motivated you to keep learning – did you ever consider dropping out?
4. Outline briefly your professional education – degrees, diplomas etc.
5. Describe briefly your own teaching practice now – the nature of it – instruments, group, individual, age groups etc.
6. What do you consider to be the most important influences on your teaching practice or style?
7. Do you have a particular philosophy or view of music teaching?
8. What aspects of music learning do you consider the most important for developing independent learners?
9. Can you outline a typical instrumental lesson?
10. What strategies do you use to try to keep students motivated?
11. What organisational or institutional factors impact - positively or negatively - most on your teaching (e.g. individual lessons; teaching alone; the books/materials available; exams; professional norms and rituals)?
12. What impact have the graded exams had on your teaching?
13. Parents are key stakeholders in the process of instrumental teaching and learning; how do you view the parents' role in the process?
14. If you could, what would you change?

APPENDIX 4: Aide- Mémoire for Interviews with Teacher/Examiners

Aide Mémoire for Interview with Music Examiners

Indicative Topics:

Key research questions: Is there a signature pedagogy for instrumental music education? If so, what does it look like in practice and what factors are driving it?

1. Tell me about your own early music education. Can you describe your own instrumental lessons? What format did they take?
2. Describe briefly your own teaching practice now – the nature of it – instruments, group, individual, age groups etc.
3. How long have you been teaching, have you seen changes?
4. What do you consider to be the most important influences on your teaching practice or teaching style?
5. Do you have a particular philosophy or view of music teaching?
6. What aspects of music learning to you consider the most important for developing independent learners?
7. Can you outline a typical instrumental exam – do you follow certain procedures?
8. Do you see patterns in students' preparation – are certain elements done better? What areas do you find strengths or weaknesses in students' performances?
9. What is your personal view of the impact of exams – positive or negative on music teaching and learning?
10. Do you think the exams have an impact on what is taught and how it is taught in the music lesson?
11. What changes do you see happening with your Board in terms of policy or organisation?
12. If you could, what would you hold and what would you change in relation to the exams?

**APPENDIX 5: Sample of Original Transcript from Teacher Interview
with Raymond**

Raymond

Interview: 05

Date: October 20th 2011

Pages: 32

Words: 9,830

Code Name: Raymond

Transcription of Interview with Raymond

K. Tell me your own background – what structure and when you started the nature of your own music education.

Ray1. Probably fairly untypical actually for a lot of music teachers in that I had no music education until I was about 20. (Really?) Yea so I was actually 20; it relates back to that question of nature versus nurture, you know really I was neither related to, nor did I know anyone who played a musical instrument. So when I was young I had no connection, it just wasn't in my environment; maybe the interest was always there but never really - **I came to it as a listener first; you know the typical teenager thing** I listened to music and some people get curious as to how do you do that so that's what happened to me; but for financial reasons, I didn't have the money actually to pay for lessons until I was about 20; so I was just turning 21 actually when I started classical guitar lessons, which was much the same as I'm doing here and individual, one-to-one lesson with a guitar teacher and that was the start and it was like the light and the glue touched paper from the minute I started - I just loved it. So I was never, I was never the surly kid who didn't want to be there.

K. You said as a teenager your interest was sparked; were you listening to classical music or... ?

Ray2. Not to start with, no; rock music, well maybe pop music maybe I was experimenting. I started expanding and by the time I started guitar lessons, I was experimenting with jazz and classical. That was the most recent stage in a development - just curiosity – I had a very curious ear; I should say, I should actually point this out that I bought an electric guitar when I was 17, and so I was just self-taught; so my first classical guitar teacher did tell me I had a lot of motor skills. **But I had a very very poor ear – that's a hard thing to teach yourself I think or maybe to pick up naturally.**

K. But how did you teach yourself then – was it by ear or how – or did you learn tab?

Ray3. Yea, things like that – tab. Chord charts, visual, visual aids; actually I have a very good appreciation of how visual aids can connect with some people better than with – more than Kodaly based methods for example so but I also have an appreciation of the fault with that because at that stage I had as many mistakes as good points and they were very frustrating to me because I was aware of them; **I wanted to do it the proper way.**

K. And when you are talking about mistakes, was it technical?

Ray4. Not so much technical –just more misunderstandings; I just didn't understand the nature of music. Why did some music work - why did the things I wanted to do, why did they not work? I just wanted to understand the whole process about music in general so that was just my general curiosity about music in general; not just necessarily my own playing, **I wanted to be part of the understanding I could see some people had it and I thought there must be a way - there must be a way of doing it.**

K. So you went and started doing lessons and it was very much classical from then on?

Ray5. **Yes it was classical guitar, absolutely and shortly after that – in a few months I started doing theory again classical, grade based a concert or two every year – it was very formalised; so I went from absolutely nothing to a very formalised music education.** So that then just accelerated, I just wanted to get better (yea) constantly ... that didn't stop for a long time (laugh).

K. It's interesting coming from that background - you could give a very good evaluation of the formalised process then.

Ray6. Yea. Also I suppose conversely a good evaluation of the non-formalised (Yea) certainly it is something I'm aware of – I certainly try to use both to a certain extent, but am, I think I maybe also have a better appreciation of the flaws in both, you know, **I would prefer the formal, that's because I know what I've done wrong; I base it on my own experience** – I try not to be a hypocrite. When people come to me and they've learnt in a certain way because a lot of the time they're doing it the way I've done it, you know so I won't say 'that's completely wrong' that's just a different way of coming to music so, because I've done that myself.

**APPENDIX 6: Sample of Coding - Declan / Signature Pedagogy
Excerpt**

Signature Pedagogy

Declan

Codes	Teachers' Learning Experience	Memoing	Teachers' Teaching Experience	Memos/Codes
Delineated spaces	D8 I went to to XXX School of Music to learn and it was another world that made made an awful lot of sense to me and am 'twas a small school of music and just about when you when you were you were able to get a fiddle under your chin and use the fingers and the bow you were put into the orchestra	Another world – escape perhaps?	Ok you mentioned earlier and I'm just going to bring you back to it because I thought it was very interesting perspective ... you were saying that you love teaching beginners would you mind elaborating again on why you like that?	
Deep structure	D9 Straight away almost probably the end of the first year I probably sat in certainly the 2 nd year of going. I think I started off in February so the 2 nd term so maybe that September I I was at the back of the junior orchestra with second violins10 One-to-one tuition ya the whole way	Orchestra	D50 Ya the freedom the freedom of am you don't know where it's going to go and you're not bound by the exam and having to do a set number of scales and the children are learning at their own their own pace and am I can experiment I can be very creative I can get music to suit from here there and everywhere you know some traditional Polkas ah maybe new publications that aren't on the exam list am it can go anywhere and you can make groups of them there's no there's no deadline and ah all in all I think it's a nice it's a nice experience for the child because I think the the real proof and the test is is what's the musical experience that's right for the child.	Professional freedom and agency
Delineated spaces	D11 We had theory classes and it was the old style of theory the filling fill in the boxes	Group from early on	D51 You're in a kind of system that that involves am components the scales the technical study the 3 pieces now it might be 10 pieces and pick 3 out of the 10 that's what you'd like to do sometimes its only 3 pieces but you're there with the requirement am the children no matter how you do it they are resistant to the scales. One child said to me during the during the year am when I give my usual the 'scales are so easy all you have to do is just is just go home and play them' really easy ya but 'they're not catchy' you know what an what an answer you know they're not catchy they're not musical	Learner-centred pace
Skills specialialis ation	D12 I don't know do you remember William Cole?	Theory	Am sooner or later the grade exam comes they'll have to do their first exam and their foot then is on the ladder and they're on it for life I think and no matter what you do you're on this ladder and am I try I try and delay it for as long as I can	Creative teaching
	D13 Questions & exercises books 1, 2, 3 & 4 (laugh)	Dry theory	Why, because do you feel that as a teacher that once you're there that's it, it's an inevitability	No deadlines;
External control - legitimises	D14 The Associated Board I think I don't know if there still there we just ploughed through and and we hated it but it was am what I used like about it was was you met your friends and the theory didn't bother me too much	Worth it because you met friends	D51 You're in a kind of system that that involves am components the scales the technical study the 3 pieces now it might be 10 pieces and pick 3 out of the 10 that's what you'd like to do sometimes its only 3 pieces but you're there with the requirement am the children no matter how you do it they are resistant to the scales. One child said to me during the during the year am when I give my usual the 'scales are so easy all you have to do is just is just go home and play them' really easy ya but 'they're not catchy' you know what an what an answer you know they're not catchy they're not musical	Impact of grades; high stakes
Implicit structure	D18 Am oh I think I love I just loved playing I I loved the place the whole the smell of the rosin even the am and just just being there and been taken seriously and I was probably quite good. I always got to play in the concerts	Social	Ya very good point	Structured system; Fragmented components; (amalgam)
Self actualisati on		Special environment –	D52 Ya	Focus on canon
				Student resistance

Deep Structure	that was a huge motivator for me D20 There was always a concert on a Tuesday night so so everybody got to play D21 Ya and am everyone knew that Tuesday night was concert night and I felt I was playing a lot possibly I would play oh every few weeks anyway maybe once a month maybe less often but looking back it seemed a lot so with the result that that I was never nervous about playing in public And tell me, you mentioned the concerts they were obviously really important so D24 Oh ya and the orchestra that was huge And the orchestra D26 And and the lessons were tough going am old style teacher highly motivated but but like a bulldozer you know Male or female D26 Female and quite tough ah shouted a lot ah bounced off me I I didn't and I wasn't a great practiser I I I'm sure was pushed quite a bit but it didn't bother me because am And what was she shouting at you about? D27 Ya pushing harder I think ya ya I I was as I say I wasn't I wasn't am a big practiser I wouldn't practise everyday and am a lot of weeks I was probably bluffing but I was a good bluffer maybe 'twas a good education in itself Ok and tell me did she D28 She was pushing say for technical things sound production pushing you I and I would have to have to I mean this all sounds sounds very merry now but it wasn't in a way because right the whole way up I never I was good enough possibly because you know because I	senses. Self-actualisation through achievement Regular concerts – performance opportunities No nerves Orchestra – very important Deep Structure Teaching style – strict, demanding Shouted, pushed; high stakes Not a good practiser – but bluffed. Extraneous benefits for life – character	So they're not music D53 They're not music you see and the technical studies can be music because an awful lot of them are melodic or they've got some technical element that that the kids think are so cool Ya D54 That the effect is so cool that they love their stuff you know and am not the scales (laugh) That was a very good answer! D55 Isn't it? And you know, another thing came up [earlier] about traditional music earlier - that's facilitated in your system to an extent is it or..? D56 Not really - its am - the way I'd put it is the teachers have a certain amount of freedom to am to introduce what they like themselves or what they find probably from their own lives, their own musical lives - for me traditional music. I've played traditional fiddle as well for years and years and years since I was a teenager and it's very important to me and I think because it's the vernacular even though you could be in the city the soundscape of Irish traditional music is all around us, it's familiar Absolutely D57 You know the girls probably do Irish dancing and they've heard it. The boys probably heard their sisters doing dancing to that so they've heard it you know (laugh) and its so much around us. It's a wonderful thing about Ireland that we have this folk music and it's on our ear so it's technically simple now to bring off there's a stylistic thing but that happens almost by osmosis just by coming to the fiddle band and I do little fiddle bands and once they can play I've got the groups I've got 3 groups the young middle and senior group and am they meet their friends again its back to that Ya D58 They meet their friends they're learning the tunes the tunes are catchy if you'd use that word and ah they get they get to go out and perform and am they get treats like being brought out to play in the streets sometimes and shopping centres. The older group I brought to America this year, another group I brought to Newfoundland 8 years ago so you know there are these treats and ah they my idea how I came	They're not catchy – not musical Scales Teachers' own background Students engage with musical material – cool Teacher discretion within this system Teachers bringing own musical experience Indigenous culture – innate in the students through the environment SOCIAL Cultural accord with environment –
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Teaching procedures marked	<p>wasn't good enough to am you know there was this push all the time for something beyond yourself you know</p> <p>And how did you come to traditional music yourself, was that in that school that you went to or was it outside of it?</p> <p>D61 A group of my friends were interested in in doing some playing when we were about 15</p> <p>Ok so it was yourselves</p> <p>D62 And it went from there, ourselves ya</p> <p>So ye kind of got that going - nothing to do with your formal training?</p> <p>D63 Absolutely not no</p> <p>And would you say then that that experience you obviously then you're bringing that experience which is nothing to do with your own kind of pedagogy your own experience of being taught you have brought it in though into your own teaching</p> <p>D64 I have brought it into my own teaching exactly ya and its am it has it has structured my teaching in a certain way that that am how would I put it am ... all the students come and do traditional music with me in a group and with each other and it has them playing for that hour in the week together without reading, from memory, and am they can then with a sense of musicality the feeling of being musical that's the thing they get the feeling that they're musical that they're playing am coherent music they have they get they they imbibe a kind of a sense of form from playing traditional tunes so you go to a classical tune and they might have a more sophisticated shape to it but they have this shape in their head that this is a piece of music</p>	<p>building</p> <p>Focus on technique</p> <p>Deficit model</p> <p>Challenge of going 'beyond yourself'.</p> <p>Traditional music at teenage stage; peers – musical agency</p> <p>Informal – Non-formal outside formal learning</p> <p>Impacted on own teaching practice</p> <p>Playing together</p> <p>Memory</p> <p>Developing</p>	<p>to it was that ah our youth orchestras got up and running about 11 12 years ago and I used to have a little orchestra in XXXX where I teach and I said why what am I am duplicating this in a much more inferior way you know so I said you know doing sort of a very scaled down classical orchestra type</p> <p>Ok The junior orchestra kind of thing</p> <p>D59 Ya a little orchestra in the centre you see small scale and limited instruments so I decided that ok I'll do something completely different - keep them playing groups but we'll do traditional fiddle instead and it went from there and my other idea was more long term in that the real proof is will they be still playing when they are adults and I and I don't think that there's am a context for playing classical music in adulthood in Ireland.</p> <p>D60 Very limited unless you're in the city or suburb so they're hardly going to stay at string quartets or find an amateur orchestra there aren't any around here anyway and so am that that was my idea with the if you played traditional music you can bring it to the pub and join in.</p> <p>Ok and we'll say in the other teaching that you do outside of that group is it all one-to-one?</p> <p>D66 It's not all one-to-one; it was initially up until a few years ago it was all one-to-one but I've started taking beginners in groups as much as I can</p> <p>D67 Am from the point of view that - number one we have a big waiting list; the other one is that I believe that playing music is a social act and that one-to-one is very kind of - its a its am its - its a big solo effort for a child</p> <p>D68 Am I discovered when I took I took to teaching groups that I I got to know the kids an awful better as what they were like as people and I quickly realised that one-to-one you don't get to know the child really because he or she is on best behaviour it's quite an intense relationship it's skills its skills training based and well its its musical and artistic as well but primarily whereas there's a whole group dynamic if you've if you've 4 or 5 kids with you and your you're the 5th person in the group as well you know</p> <p>D69 And their personalities come out they laugh a lot am it's very light</p>	<p>perhaps indicating conflict with classical</p> <p>Social Catchy (Teaching procedures marked).</p> <p>Performance</p> <p>Treats, rewards</p> <p>Specialised futures</p> <p>Local needs – teacher agency.</p> <p>Sees trad as having more opportunities for life long participation</p> <p>Limitations of opportunities for classical music (skills specialisation)</p> <p>COMPETENCE</p>
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		<p>musical identity</p> <p>Imbibing; Real music</p> <p>Shapes understanding in classical music</p> <p>(Note that he implies that students come to a better musical understanding through their own culture; and then in turn bring that to classical music).</p>	<p>and they're learning just as much maybe better</p> <p>And the other thing have those students moved from groups to individual</p> <p>D71 No</p> <p>No they've stayed in the group</p> <p>D72 They've stayed as group am there are a few of them had become individual for practical reasons where they go to a different they've moved to a different school secondary school or and maybe for that reason that that you just can't get people to come at the same time but I have some I have a group I've a couple of groups 2 groups now that am have gone through the primary school into secondary school and they I've managed to keep them together and its still going very well, they are reaching grade 3 and they're still there as a group of 4</p> <p>Ya that's very good</p> <p>D73 And they enjoy each others company and they I think they look forward to it much more than the individuals</p> <p>D74 Its hard to tell I know that several years ago I had I was teaching in a primary school and I was able to get the students in paired lessons and we had to leave that primary school because the class teachers objected to the children coming out of class am that's another road we could go down (laugh) but am when I had to split them up then when I had to take them in the group vocational school am after school outside of school hours and there was it was all fine with most of them but there was one little girl found it all too intense</p> <p>The one-to-one?</p> <p>D75 Ya</p> <p>D76 And to this day she I have to be very gentle with her she's she'd be 14 now so we've moved on she would have been 9 or 10 that time</p> <p>But she stuck with it</p> <p>D77 She stuck with it because she really wants to but I'm very am conscious that I can't let her feel that I'm pushing it always she has to maybe be in control herself something like that that she can get upset</p> <p>D78 You know if it gets too intense and that's what I find difficult myself as the teacher in one-to-one that it's an intense situation and because the children are - not only children - there are teenagers young people am they're still coming in on their best behaviour</p>	<p>Groups – a personal decision</p> <p>Practical reason but also educational/social</p> <p>Pressure on student of one-to-one</p> <p>Individual personalities</p> <p>(work graded and stratified)</p> <p>Intensity of relationship</p> <p>Skills based</p> <p>Group more egalitarian</p> <p>More fun (delineated spaces)</p> <p>Keeping groups going beyond beginner stage</p> <p>Competence – student control</p>
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APPENDIX 7: Sample of Coding - Rita / Assessment Excerpt

Rita					
Memos/ Codes	Teachers' own experience of assessment	Memos/ Codes	Assessment in Practice	Memos/ Codes	Views on assessment
<p>AB more widely recognised</p> <p>Based on own experience</p>	<p><i>K: and why would you choose the AB –</i></p> <p>R26: Oh it think it is, I think it is and because I did it myself as well; I did both; I did IRB2 always on piano; I did it (UKB2) on flute up to grade 4 and then I switched, and I always did it on violin; so then I'm just familiar with that exam board. I think the pieces are a quite higher and the scales and pieces are a little bit more difficult.</p>	<p>Parental pressure on teacher</p> <p>Teacher agency</p> <p>Communication with parents</p> <p>Selecting board to suit child</p>	<p>R22: So that has been my big thing in the past two years really I think just getting them aware that they can actually get them playing these songs ...am.. and then obviously the exams come into it because parents really do, especially in XXX, the parent always want the exams to to to be a focus.</p> <p>R23: Oh all of them! (K. All of them, really?) Yea yea, they come in in September and the first thing they ask about is the exam. What is she going to be doing this year? And things like that.</p> <p><i>K. Have you ever had a situation where parents have been angry or irate because the exam work wasn't done.</i></p> <p>R24 No No I try to keep on top of it and I keep them informed you know like I explain to them you know which exam exam board might suit the child better, like whether they'd rather go IRB2 or UKB2...if they're like high achievers and I know they are going to do loads of practice and they want the exam they</p>	<p>Different boards suit different students</p> <p>Kinda stiff</p> <p>Inappropriate for purpose – not student-centred</p> <p>Different standards (Inside knowledge)</p> <p>Negative impact of exams – piano student</p>	<p>R25: Oh it is, it is, definitely it is I think, I don't know is it the same with the IRB2 but I get the feeling that whether you are 8 or 38 there's no allowances for nerves or anything like that in the UKB2, they tend to go in and the examiners tend to be kinda stiff, whereas the Royal Irish has a warmer feel to it - that's just my experience of it anyway; and it's intimidating for the kids going in; there's a warmer feel off the examiners, that's my experience of it anyway and they seem to be less stressful</p> <p>R27: It is, it is; like it depends, like the IRB2 singing syllabus is terrible really; like for grade 1 they have 'Bessy the Black Cat' but you could have a 14 year old doing grade 1 who will not sing that – or a boy – your know and it's just not relevant to them at all I meant that's not going to be fun. And as well, with the UKB2, especially with the flute pieces, the grade 8 pieces in the IRB2 are equivalent to grade 7 in the UKB2. So it varies across the instrument as well.</p> <p><i>K. And I'm just really interested in the parental interaction with you. Do you find that parents come in at the outset and aks what exam are they going to do?</i></p> <p>R28: Well I kinda know my parents who are going to do that at this point.</p> <p>R33 [That and] because the teachers are teaching in the style they are teaching in. I won't name names now but I have a girl, I've had her for years on flute, and she did piano as well and it's such a shame because she's spent, since she was in</p>

		<p>Parents don't care which exam as long as there is one</p> <p>Teacher is the primary decision maker</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Enjoyment</p> <p>Not solely exams – but seems to be a key element</p> <p>Parents misunderstand exam system (Communication)</p> <p>'waste of a year'</p>	<p>are serious about it then I'll explain that the UKB2 might be the way to go and for others I'll explain that the IRB2 might just be a less stressful option. The parents are <i>always</i> fine with that I don't think they care which exam they do as long as there is something happening at the end of the year that will give a focus point (K. Ok)</p> <p>R38. I think it's mostly the teacher's influence; the parents are fine they want to see some sort of kind of achievement at the end of the year for obviously they are paying loads of money, but I don't think they mind if their kid is really really happy; they are doing performance regularly during the year and then <i>happen</i> to do an exam at the end of the year; ok and they are doing well. The parents like seeing them at the Christmas concert, they'd like them to be able to play for their friends</p>	<p>High stakes</p> <p>Drop-out</p> <p>Too hard, stress, teacher putting pressure</p> <p>High stakes</p> <p>Deficit model</p> <p>Attrition</p> <p>Financial cost</p>	<p>5th class I'd, say doing piano and flute and she's delighted because next year, she's in 6th year, she can give up piano. It's <i>terrible</i>, because she's doing IRB2, she <i>hates</i> the pieces and she does <i>one</i> Christmas carol at Christmas time, and that's it, she can't play anything at all, like she can't play anything without the book, all she wants to do is Adele or something like that but...</p> <p><i>K. Is it the teacher won't do it?</i></p> <p>R34: Yea, the teacher in that case; ammmm it just <i>kills</i> me that she's spent this much time and she's just dying to give it up so her experience of music is 'oh God I never want to play that again' your know. It's too hard, everything is about being hard, and the exam, and it's stress and its getting given out to and it's just horrible. And I felt bad then because of the flute, I'd hope that it wasn't and I was trying to do all the pop stuff as well but she wasn't interested in that; she would have loved piano if it was all popular stuff and she would have got something out of it and for the time she was practicing she'd be able to play something now and she might keep it on next year</p> <p><i>K. And is she going to give up flute as well do you reckon?</i></p> <p>R35. Oh yea – the two of them are gone now – it's terrible. It kills me and the amount of money that her Mum has spent as well.</p>
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APPENDIX 8: Coding, Classification and Data Selection

Classification	Texts/Codes	Data
Implicit Structure	<p>Formalised music education;</p> <p>Conventional learner profile;</p> <p>We don't have jazz;</p> <p>Discipline;</p> <p>Deficit model;</p>	<p>Ray03. <u>I wanted to be part of the understanding that some people had and I thought there must be a way. Went from absolutely nothing to a very formalised music education.</u></p> <p>Ray06: It was classical guitar – in a few months I started doing theory, <u>again classical, grade based – very formalised.</u> The speed at which I was doing my exams was two or three a year.</p> <p>Ray24. All my contemporaries in college were doing it since they were kids. So I always keep quiet about how late I started. I was asked about it at an interview once – I won't mention the prestigious music school - we were talking about my background and his follow up question was to list the disadvantages I had as a late starter, and how that effects my teaching. We disagreed over that - he definitely didn't think it was a good thing. I was quite insulted and a bit hurt. <u>He was buying into the myth - he could see my CV, my background, but he was overlooking that and looking at the age I started and I thought ... it is the progress, not the starting point [that matters].</u></p> <p>OR153 But <u>we don't have Jazz ... I think there is a jazz teacher around alright but because the teachers haven't been taught jazz so no not as part of the exam.</u></p> <p>Rita72. When I joined the band it really opened my eyes - there is so much here that I don't know whereas all along I wouldn't even have known. <u>I'd done all my training - I couldn't have done any more practice;</u> I went into guys who could just improvise anything and Rick's calling out all these crazy chords <u>and I didn't have a clue;</u> "D# minor flat 5" and I'm thinking "what is that?"</p> <p>L123. <u>I think the discipline that's involved in learning an instrument is often not recognised.</u> I find that students who achieve well in music are often high achievers in other areas – even if they do not go on to do music in College, they get into medicine or law or other professions. <u>I think the discipline they learn really stands to them.</u></p> <p>OR50. [the important thing is] trying to get across to kids how important music is in their lives - if they can take the discipline - and <u>it toughens them up for exams.</u> Leaving Cert is nothing compared to piano exams in [our school] because you're having to perform physically and mentally, and co-ordinate - it's everything, emotionally control your nerves. Leaving Cert! - what's that? It toughens them up for life. <u>It's good discipline, keeps them out of trouble and off computers.</u></p> <p>D28. <u>This all sounds very merry now, but it wasn't in a way, because the whole way up I was never</u></p>

		<p><u>good enough, and because I wasn't good enough there was this push all the time for something beyond yourself.</u></p> <p>M14. <u>My lessons were quite pressured and having this intensity was not helpful.</u> The pressure came from the teacher... partly me and partly the teacher - <u>we both had the idea that if something went wrong it was because I wasn't working hard enough</u></p> <p>S35. <u>He noticed cracks in my technique that he wanted to fix. He literally stripped everything down, to learn proper tone, proper breathing, everything from scratch without ever looking at a piece - we spent three months solidly on technique.</u></p> <p>OR17. <u>To avoid 'bad habits' my system is that earlier in the year I get them to address the scales for their exams.</u></p> <p>L6. I know I was probably very difficult, I wouldn't do the scales and sight-reading.</p> <p>R34. It's too hard, everything is about being hard, and the exam, and it's stress and its getting given out to and it's just horrible.</p> <p>S35. All that stuff [muscular movement] which was foreign to me in a way - <u>something I hadn't been taught properly.</u></p> <p>Ray8. I wanted to get as good as possible as fast as possible – <u>so I went through the grades: got to grade 8 and thought 'where next?' College next, kept on doing the same thing – diploma, degree, masters.</u> It's interesting looking back, from being shown middle C on a page to finishing my Masters was 9 or 10 years.</p> <p>S35. All that stuff [muscular movement] which was foreign to me in a way - something I hadn't been taught properly. It was frustrating - <u>I wanted to move on but of course you have to go back [to improve].</u></p> <p>OR17. <u>I come from the Russian school and in Russia you have to do all the scales' exams first and you're not allowed do the pieces unless your scales are up to scratch</u> – so for them it's absolutely essential. You can't play the piano repertoire without it.</p> <p>OR12. I was the sort of student that <u>I was prepared to adapt</u> there were some students who for example when they went to XXXX they did not want to adapt they wanted to be am giving part of themselves and am it just would not work <u>you couldn't study with him if you were going to be like that.</u></p> <p>M35. the whole team work ... I suppose piano was much more solo and you're on your own a lot' as a child you get to perform at a concert once a year and that's all you do <u>whereas I was singing twice every Sunday... I was acting as a professional musician because there were all these professional expectations of me, to turn up, and be heard, and sing the right notes and be part of a performance</u></p>
	Specialised futures;	
	Professional expectations;	

**APPENDIX 9: Colour Coding Qualitative Data from the Parents’
Questionnaire**

What style of music are you most interested in your child learning? (See also Wordle Appendix 20)

Classical Traditional Jazz Popular/Modern Enjoyment/Fun Variety

1. Modern and classical

2. Classical, blues, jazz and trad

3. Modern

4. All styles to begin

5. Any - no preference, once he/she enjoys

6. Her own preference and some classical music

7. Classical music - Mozart, Chopin

8. I think variety is essential part; perhaps include more of the familiar tunes. Perhaps this would make it more enjoyable and interesting

9. Popular tunes, light classical pieces, charts songs that she enjoys - anything that will keep her interested

10. Classical

11.

12. Pop

13. I don't mind so long as she enjoys playing

14. All styles

15. 1. Classical 2. Classical pop or pop (as it keeps the children engaged, and if they're happy, I'm happy)

16. I have three children who are learning the piano and each is very different so as they are getting older they are choosing their own style regardless of me which is what I want really

17. Popular/easy listening pieces/popular classical pieces

18. Modern

19. Popular and traditional music

20. A mixture of classical, pop and traditional music

21. Any music once he gets enjoyment from it

22. I am interested in her being able to pick up a piece of music and play herself

23. Contemporary would be nice but most piano lessons via schools of music don't offer such

24. Any

25. Classical, pop-songs, Ballads, Jazz, popular music

26. Music she enjoys including pop-rock

27. Traditional

28. Classical/Spanish guitar

29. Modern familiar music; lively and enjoyable

30. Classical, jazz, some contemporary and what she likes

31. No particular style, just what my children enjoy, which covers a wide range from pop to classical

32. My daughter has completed grade 8 in flute this year

33. Classical and Modern

34. Music that my child enjoys playing (popular music right now)

35. Classical and traditional Irish

35. A wide range of music so that my child may experience all aspects of music styles and choose for himself what he's most interested in

36. Open
37. All
38. Initially classical repertoire but once she gets proficient - any style
39. None in particular
40. A range of music to broaden her interest
- 41.
42. Eliz is 22 and completing Rock School exams (reluctantly) - whatever music she enjoys - and without exams - spoil her enjoyment
43. Whatever music she enjoys is fine with me
44. Contemporary
45. Jazz, hip-hop and gospel
46. Current music
- 47.
48. All styles
49. All types but classical is important
50. A good mix so she can form an opinion herself
51. I am personally interested in jazz. But my daughter has expressed an interest in the violin.
52. Broad range - both boys attend classical and traditional lessons
53. Whatever she is interested in playing
- 54.
55. At the moment she does her exam pieces but I'd like her to play whatever she likes and I buy her sheet music
56. I like music that we both recognise
57. I leave it up to my daughter
- 58.
59. Open to all styles
60. Music for enjoyment - introduction to several styles
70. Happy to allow her negotiate this with teacher. Has been emphasis on classical. Think she would have liked some jazz, Irish etc
71. Irish/Modern pop songs etc
72. Whatever style she enjoys at the time
73. Whatever interests her
74. Classical and popular
75. Modern music, pop
76. I don't play music, so don't really have an opinion
77. Traditional and popular music
78. A variety
79. A wide spectrum, pop, classical, rock etc
80. I would like my child to learn to play all types of music and then pick his own favourite
81. I have no particular style of music in mind except that she would have a very good appreciation for music and in time be equipped to choose the style that she loves
82. Ability to read music and have an ear for music - no particular style. Would like to see her exposed to all styles.
83. Classical
84. Whatever they're interested in
85. Traditional

86. No particular one - prefer a variety

87. Classical

88. Popular guitar music (current)

89. Music he enjoys playing

90. I really don't mind once he enjoys playing it

91. Classical and modern

92. All types, varies repertoire and type of music he enjoys playing

93. All types

94. My child goes to classical music through XXXX, but is also attending traditional lessons elsewhere

95. Whatever he enjoys. No strong preference

**APPENDIX 10: Letter to Principals for Permission to Interview
Teachers**

[REDACTED]

Principal

[REDACTED]

Co Wicklow



Dear [REDACTED],

As you are aware, I am undertaking a Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) programme at King's College London (KCL). I am writing to seek permission to undertake some research at the [REDACTED].

The research is looking at practices in instrumental music education from the perspectives of key agents in the process i.e. students, parents, teachers and examiners. The objective of the study is to gain a wider insight into the motives, view-points and attitudes of the different participants, and to see how these reconcile with current practices.

Because practices may differ at local level, I have selected schools to represent different demographical areas. The field of instrumental music education is under-represented in the research domain, and I know from speaking to you, that you have a strong interest in contributing to the knowledge base in the area.

In a time of transition for music education, it is hoped that this research may contribute to the debate on new directions for instrumental teaching. The research is entitled:

'Key Signature Pedagogy - an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland.'

In practical terms I am requesting permission to hold semi-structured interviews with a three teachers at the [REDACTED], to discuss factors, routines and practices which impact on their teaching practices and beliefs. These would take place at a time and place to suit the participants, and they will receive full details and information prior to the interviews.

If your school is willing to participate, I would be happy to contact teachers directly who may wish to receive further information, with a view to participating.

My supervisor for this project is Dr. Jane Jones of the Department of Education and Professional Studies at King's College London, and this research will not proceed without full ethical approval from the Research Ethics Office of KCL.

I am enclosing a more detailed outline of the research proposal which may give you and your colleagues a greater insight into the objectives of the study. Please feel free to contact me at any stage if you require further information on the process.

Yours sincerely,

Kay O'Sullivan

Phone: (086) 8163969

Email: catherine.o'sullivan@kcl.ac.uk

**APPENDIX 11: Information Sheet to Teacher Participants in
Interviews**

INFORMATION SHEET for Teacher Participants in Interviews



REC Reference Number: **SSHL/10/11-32**

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Research: 'Key Signature Pedagogy - an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland.'

We would like to invite you, as an instrumental music teacher, to participate in this post-graduate research in the area of music education, as part of Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) at King's College London. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before deciding to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aims of the research are as follows:

To examine the attitudes, aspirations, and expectations for instrumental music tuition, from the perspectives of different key participants in the process (students, teachers, parents, and examiners); and to see how these converge with existing practices in the field.

To inform the debate on existing practices and new directions in the area of instrumental music teaching and learning, and to examine if the student experience and motivation can be enhanced through a more learner-centred approach.

What are the possible benefits of this research?

- To enable teachers and researchers to consider stakeholders' views to improve learning and motivation in the context of the instrumental music lesson.
- To gain a wider insight into the motives, view-points and attitudes of the different participants in the learning process, and to see how these reconcile with current practices.
- In a time of transition for music education, it is hoped that this research may contribute to the debate on new directions for instrumental teaching.

Who is being asked to participate?

Twelve teachers, from four different music schools in different parts of the country, who are involved in instrumental music teaching, and willing to reflect on, discuss, and share their views on factors impacting on their own practice.

Students, parents and examiners from different schools and centres are also participating in questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

What will happen if you agree to participate?

You will be asked to attend a semi-structured interview with the researcher at a time and place that suits you. You will receive an outline of the questions and topics at least one week in advance so that you can consider the issues. The interview will be audio recorded and will be approximately 45 minutes in duration. The interview will be

transcribed, and you will receive a copy of the transcript should you wish to amend any aspect before it is included in the final report.

Are there any risks?

You will not be identified in the transcripts, nor will your individual responses be discussed with others outside the research team. Participation in the process will not disadvantage you in any way with respect to professional or collegiate relationships. You may withdraw at any stage from the process right up to when the transcripts will be used in the final report; this is envisaged to be around December 31st 2012.

What are the arrangements for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality?

- Recordings will be treated as confidential and will be deleted on transcription; you will not be identified in the transcripts and your individual responses will not be discussed with anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors.
- If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form (attached below).
- You may withdraw your data from the project at any time up until it is transcribed for use in the final report, the target date for which is December 31st 2011.
- A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

Name and contact details of the researcher:

Kay O'Sullivan, c/o Leinster School of Music & Drama, Griffith College Dublin, Dublin 18.

Email: catherine.o'sullivan@kcl.ac.uk Phone: (086) 8163969

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Dr Jane Jones, Franklin Wilkins Building, (Waterloo Bridge Wing), Waterloo Campus, King's College London, Stamford Street, London SE1 9NH. email: jane.jones@kcl.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



Title of Study: 'Key Signature Pedagogy - an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland.'

King's College London Research Ethics Committee Ref: SSSL/10/11-32

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify you from any publications.

Teacher
Role

- I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that we will be able to withdraw the data up to December 31st 2012. ☐
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. ☐
- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for the purpose of the research. ☐

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

APPENDIX 12: Letter Granting Ethical Approval

Catherine O'Sullivan
22 St Finbarr's Park
The Lough
Ireland
14 June 2011

Dear Catherine,

SSHL/10/11-32 Key signatures and signature pedagogies - participant perspectives from the instrumental music lesson.

Thank you for sending in the amendments requested to the above project. I am pleased to inform you that these meet the requirements of the SSHL RESC and therefore that full approval is now granted on the proviso that you will not proceed with the focus groups with students until the Garda Vetting has been received.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/index.php?id=247>).

For your information ethical approval is granted until **14 June 2012**. If you need approval beyond this point you will need to apply for an extension to approval at least two weeks prior to this explaining why the extension is needed, (please note however that a full re-application will not be necessary unless the protocol has changed). You should also note that if your approval is for one year, you will not be sent a reminder when it is due to lapse.

If you do not start the project within three months of this letter please contact the Research Ethics Office. Should you need to modify the project or request an extension to approval you will need approval for this and should follow the guidance relating to modifying approved applications:
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/applicants/modifications.html>

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the approving committee/panel. In the event of an untoward event or an adverse reaction a full report must be made to the Chairman of the approving committee/review panel within one week of the incident.

Please would you also note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you from time to time to ascertain the status of your research.

If you have any query about any aspect of this ethical approval, please contact your panel/committee administrator in the first instance (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/contacts.html>). We wish you every success with this work.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Joni Browne – Senior Research Ethics Officer

c.c. Jane Jones

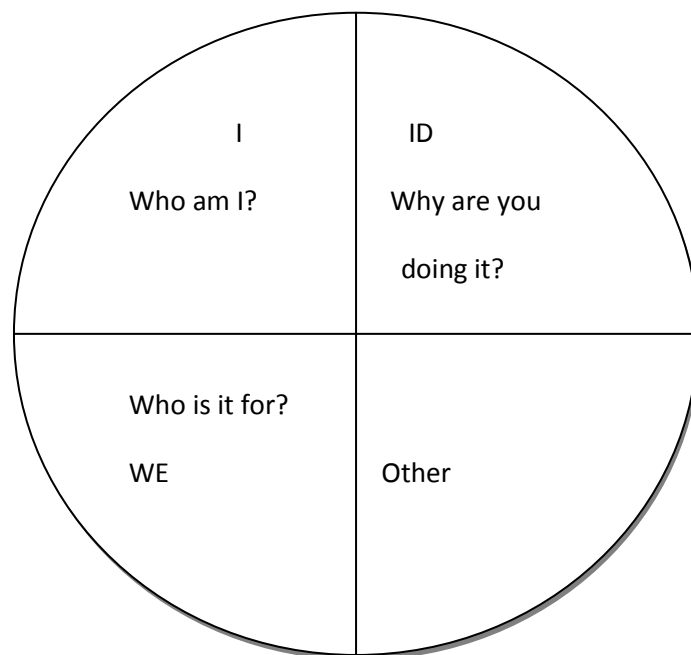
APPENDIX 13: Diary Samples

06/07/2011

Completed the third day of the UCC summer school and this was very worthwhile, although once again I felt a bit like an outsider. Having been in King's College London, I found this was a good way of getting in touch with Irish people who are doing doctorate level studies. It was good to hear the issues discussed with an Irish accent. It is like the same diet but with a different flavour.

Many key issues were very clearly discussed yesterday. There was an excellent lecture by Prof Jim Deegan from Mary Immaculate College. His dealing with Ethics was superb and I regret that I did not have this insight when I was doing my own.

Some of the key issues that he dealt with:



Theories of Self:

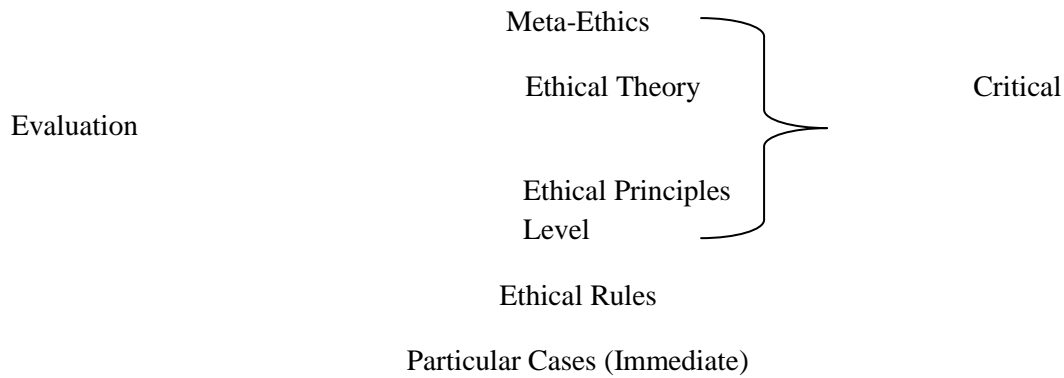
Self – the meaning maker

Identity – the meaning made

Self as a responsive instrument

Is research ethics about discourse or application?

Ethics relies on the individual – Raphael's painting of Plato and Aristotle – Plato – universal and Aristotle is grounded.



07/07/2011

Having been part of the cohort PhD this week I feel rather despondent. The group has already collected their data. Having started the process a year after me they now are a year ahead. Certainly, I have more writing experience than many and don't dread that as much but the past year seems somewhat wasted. What I had anticipated as worst case scenario at the start of this year has happened, i.e. the ethics took so long that I have missed the academic year and I am trying to gather it during the summer when I should be analysing and writing.

I have got 4 teachers lined up to interview: I need 12. Who are they? What do I need to do?

Teachers' interviews:

1. I need to contact St XXXX to ask her for access as gate-keeper
2. I need to contact SXXXX to ask her for access as gate-keeper
3. I need to contact AXXXX to ask her for access as gate-keeper
4. I need to decide which teachers I will contact in the XXXX and get on with that.

Questionnaires:

1. Buy envelopes, copy SXXXX's letter and the information sheet and send them out to CCMC parents.
2. Contact Mary for the list of XXXX parents and do the same.

Examiners:

1. Who will these be? Maybe [REDACTED] might know someone?
2. Will I use [REDACTED] as a teacher or an examiner?

The only way I can pick myself up from this slump is to take action. After today I'll have two interviews – I'll be able to start transcription tonight!!

I need to maintain research diary – I must write down some of the discussion with C and P last week.

Comments that Declan made this week:

1. He feels that it is the teachers that are driving the *status quo* not parents.
2. He feels that the drop-out is greater for piano. He says the young student starts by playing up against the wall – looking at the wall, shut from the world. They do not get a chance to play with others as with other instruments.
3. He says that all his students get a chance to play trad.
4. He says that they can play trad as part of their exam in the VEC system – but only up to grade 5 – ask him again for clarification.

Encounter with Basil Bernstein:

All changed, changed utterly:

A terrible beauty is born.

Easter 1916 (W.B. Yeats)

If ‘beauty’ is substituted for ‘clarity’ – then this sums up my encounter with Bernstein.

17/02/2012

What's the story following discussion of first draft?

Introduction must flag the whole chapter – key issues; it is the most important section of the chapter – like an abstract.

Look up Annette Lareau on middle-class parenting – a style of parenting – helicopter parents.

Bourdieu – cultural capital – see also Judith Butler.

Parents may see learning music as a point of distinction – social good – finishing school.

See the Tiger Mother.

Note the piano-guitar dichotomy.

Childhood is now about scholarship – Cambridge. 'Scholarisation of childhood'.

Participation of parents – parents as policing – very big investment. Signature pedagogy – they know what they should expect – what it should be (even those who have not done music before). Probably investing in a signature pedagogy – intuitive understanding of what this should be.

Mini-case studies – refer to these in the methodology chapter. Also mention the limitations of the research tool used (the questionnaire) in the methodology.

Use the mini-case studies to illustrate certain points or key thematic issues?

Needs more selection and precision in the analysis. Do not present everything. Some of this is unnecessary and does not make any point.

Example of descriptive – parental interest

Analytical – gendered instruments – or class/parenting – what is it telling me?

The attitudes of the parents (and probably teachers) is not reflecting the way assessment takes place in education today.

Research questions – to focus analysis

Selection and

:writing

:themes

Descriptive
how many?
Parental
interest

Analytical
gendered
instruments
musicians of
distinction

General:

Work around the identification of key themes

Identify points of tension/real importance – what do the data show?

Wrap around existing literature

Investment in the pedagogy – money, time, hope, aspiration.

Contradictions in relation to parents' views:

Parents want their children to do music for creative and social reasons (this is supported in the qualitative findings). Exams rate very low, yet:

1. Parents agree and strongly agree that exams provide an essential independent appraisal
2. Annual exams are important to mark the child's progress
3. Exams provide a sense of achievement – very highly rated
4. Exams provide motivation to practise
5. Parents do not think that the child enjoys exams YET
6. Parents do not consider that the exams put too much pressure on their children

Other findings for parents:

Parents state that participating socially in music is the main motivation for initiating lessons followed closely by developing him academically

1. Parents think that individual lessons are important
2. The exams do not facilitate, enable or support this
3. Playing for orchestra and orchestra rated low (but this may be due to the high number for piano and guitar)

Parents want their children to play popular music or music that they like and will get enjoyment from. Parents think that if the child likes the music, s/he is more likely to continue. YET

1. The examinations do not provide popular repertoire or repertoire that students know.

APPENDIX 14: Conference Paper

Student voices from the instrumental music lesson: Who is calling the piper's tune?

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Abstract

This study focuses on assessment in instrumental music education, and its pedagogical implications, from the perspective of the student. The historical legacy of the graded exam system and its impact on teaching and learning are explored. The study takes place at an independent music school in southern Ireland and examines students' attitudes to the exams, their perceived importance in the learning process, their impact on the repertoire played; and this is compared with students' other musical interests and listening preferences. While students found exams to be important for their learning, it was the least enjoyable performance setting for all age groups; the exams greatly influence the repertoire that students play, with popular music, traditional music, and film/show music not being represented at all in the exam repertoire. The study supports previous findings that exams influence what, and how, students practise. Some explanations for the findings are proposed and some recommendations made for a more learner centered, flexible approach to assessment in this field.

1. Introduction

Classroom music teaching and instrumental music teaching have occupied different parallel educational universes. Each has developed its own distinct pedagogy, curriculum and assessment strategies along the lines of what Bernstein might classify 'competence' and 'performance' models respectively [1]. Mills identifies this dichotomy at practitioner level stating: 'Strangely, given my own commitment to and immersion in creative experiment in schools, when a local piano teacher first asked if I would teach her 9 year old daughter violin privately in the evenings, it never occurred to me to structure her lessons other than in much the same way I recalled being taught violin' [2].

Classroom music teaching in Ireland has enjoyed considerable development and innovation through the implementation of the 'new' Leaving Cert syllabus, which radically

transformed curriculum and assessment in the area. While not without its critics initially, this reform has to be viewed as an enormous success in terms of the number of teenagers now engaging in music education, with the numbers taking Leaving Cert Music increasing year on year since its implementation. This is in contrast to an identified problem with drop-out rates from formal instrumental music education for students, particularly during the transition from primary to secondary school [3].

The interplay between pedagogy, curriculum and assessment as inseparable partner in all fields of education is widely recognised [4]. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of existing assessment strategies on pedagogy and curriculum in instrumental music education. In the light of the findings, and drawing from the classroom music experience, recommendations are made to address the issue of attrition in instrumental music education.

Three research questions have been identified:

1. How do students perceive the role of the graded examinations in their own musical learning?
2. To what extent does the graded examination system impact on the repertoire and musical content of the instrumental lesson?
3. What are the students' perceptions of the repertoire they play in terms of their own musical interests and preferred listening?

This research is pertinent at this time because the past 20 years have seen considerable growth in the development of independent music schools and studios in Ireland. The work of these schools has remained under the radar in terms of academic research; yet in the absence of a systematic state- supported instrumental music scheme, it is the mainstay for developing the potential music graduates of the future. Furthermore, with the implementation of the Music Generation project, this area of music education would benefit from some research and debate at practitioner and academic levels to underpin and support the work that is taking place.

2. Literature Review

The voice of the young instrumental student has not often been heard, although some recent studies have focused specifically on this area [3-5]. There seems to be little connection between the music that students enjoy listening to and that which they play [3]; and there is a disconnect between the music that students engage with as consumers and as music practitioners [6].

Driscoll highlights the high drop-out rates from instrumental tuition [3]. She found that in the UK participation in instrumental lessons peaks at age 11 with 14% participating, declining to 9% by the age of 14. Figures from the Associated Boards of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) also indicate a steady decline in the numbers taking music exams as the grades rise [7]. Driscoll's study cites boredom as the principal reason for discontinuing, and the most frequently cited reason for not starting [3].

However, music can play an important role in students' lives, in terms of group identity in adolescence, self-concept and emotional expression, [8]. Recent findings in the UK indicate that 91% of children and young people aged 7-19 like listening to music, but only 39% engage in music-making activities [9].

Downey cautions against making assumptions about young people's culture stating that it 'is multi-faceted and incorporates many different musics often depending on national, regional and local differences'. She highlights that for young Irish students traditional music is very much part of the 'multi-faceted popular music culture in Ireland' [10].

The one-to-one setting is the accepted practice for the instrumental lesson, although group lessons are now occasionally employed. Daniel states 'the stigma of past generations that group teaching is not first-class teaching and has limited value for the serious student is fast disappearing' [11]. However, this view is not shared by everyone. An evaluation of the Music Education Partnerships in Dublin and Donegal found that a large number of people within the Donegal region highlighted the need for individual rather than group tuition. The tutors in the Donegal programme felt that students who were progressing quickly needed individual tuition as soon as they were ready for it [12]. Parents said that students can get bored in group lessons while other children are being taught. The pupils on the other hand stated that they enjoyed group tuition, because lessons moved more quickly, they enjoyed peer learning, and learning alongside others gave them the

motivation to improve. This indicates that while the students are in favour of group tuition, the adult stakeholders (parents and tutors) favour maintaining the individual tuition template which is the unchanged cultural ritual.

The graded examinations are strongly associated with instrumental teaching. Historically, they provided accreditation for students; helped to establish standards nationwide; and provided accountability for parents and teachers. The European Music School Union reports that, in Ireland, pupils provide 85% of the cost of instrumental tuition, with only 14% being provided by the state or municipality [13]. It is therefore obvious that students and their parents, as stakeholders, will require tangible evidence of accountability.

Salaman outlines some of the problems that exist for teaching as a result of the graded examination system. He states that the syllabus or curriculum is 'assessment led' [14], and may hinder many of the perceived benefits of music education; namely 'the development of musicianship, a growing acquaintance with a wide repertoire of music, the pleasures of playing in ensemble, an ability to discuss questions relating to music and sheer enjoyment' [14]. He found that the system is heavily dependent on the acquisition of musical literacy; it examines an amalgam of skills, rather than a many faceted process; there is no link between the technical requirements and the repertoire played; the repertoire is highly prescriptive limiting the breadth and balance of the music students learn; there is no ensemble playing; and improvisation, playing by ear or memory, are largely ignored.

Among the perceived benefits of assessment are motivation and accreditation. Most people will respond to a stimulus like an exam and will work harder in preparation for the event. Hallam found a strong link between musical achievement and practice, with 91% of students indicating that they practise more when preparing for exams. There were statistically significant differences in students' reports of practising scales, exercises, studies, improvisation, aural work, and sight-reading when preparing for exams but no difference in the reported practice of repertoire [15]. There is some evidence therefore that examinations motivate students to practise and have a bearing on the type of practice undertaken.

Others contend that music-making is a delightful pursuit and should provide its own intrinsic motivation [14-16]. Salaman questions whether the motivation generated by examinations is primarily connected with music-making or exam taking. This system may favour the student who is focusing on the expert

level and not the competent or proficient levels, and therefore contribute to drop-out rates amongst those who do not feel they have achieved a sufficiently high level of attainment [14].

Following a review of the literature on motivation and musical identity, Hallam concludes that 'identifying oneself as a musician requires a commitment to music which in turn demands that engagement with music is enjoyable and active' [17]. Family and teachers are important to this process, and praise is crucial to the development of musical self-confidence.

Rife states that satisfaction is a key factor in children continuing with private music lessons. In a study of attitudes of 568 children aged 9-12 taking private music lessons, she found that 'having a good time' and 'fun' were important to children; and that increased playing time at lessons increased satisfaction [5].

Rostvall found that lessons were dominated by method books therefore 'the content of the lesson was not music as a sounding phenomenon, but music as symbolic objects' [18]. She also found that because of the predominance of the Western art tradition, music from other genres was arranged to fit traditional teaching methods. Teachers and students communicated via the printed score and that there was no emphasis on playing by ear.

Sloboda cautions against the use of exams as extrinsic motivators stating that they are most effective when used to develop intrinsic motivation for students' musical development [16]. While acknowledging environmental factors, such as parental support, and teacher characteristics, there is considerable evidence that intrinsic motivation is the most important factor in sustained engagement in music education [19-20].

3. Methodology

This study took place at an independent (private) music school in Cork. The school has a student enrolment of approx 550. It has a main teaching centre and runs a peripatetic scheme based in a number of primary schools, teaching instrumental and vocal music, and musicianship classes from elementary to Leaving Cert level. Questionnaires were distributed to 200 instrumental students ranging in age from 8 to 18; 67 students responded indicating a 33.5% response rate. Of the 67 respondents, 43 were girls, 23 boys and one did not indicate gender. There was a cluster of respondents in the 11-12 and 16-18 age bracket, with 25 students in each of these groups. This facilitated comparative

analysis of attitudes for these different age groups.

To increase the breadth and reliability of the opinions, multiple item indicators were designed to give a fuller description. The questionnaires were anonymous to avoid a possible Hawthorn factor. The style of questions varied: factual questions were closed; open questions were included to ascertain students' taste in music and repertoire played. The questions dealt with students' attitudes to examinations and other performance settings; and students were asked to list all the pieces they played over the previous year, as well as their preferred listening. The responses were categorised for analysis into genres, and this process facilitated a good snapshot of the music students are listening to, and the repertoire being played. Prior to the main study, the questionnaire was distributed to a number of students of similar age to test readability.

4. Findings

Of the 67 respondents, five played two instruments giving a total number of 72 instruments indicated. A wide range of instruments was represented, the most popular being piano (n= 46; 63.8%) with guitar next (n=10; 13.9%) and 8 played flute (9.7%). 10 respondents (19.4%) had never taken an exam in any instrument. The instrument played seems to be a strong factor in not taking an exam, with 8 of the 13 guitarists not doing exams. Only 3 piano students had not taken an exam, and these were aged 8, 10 and 11, therefore this is likely to be a factor of age. Two students, who indicated not doing exams on their second instruments (clarinet and guitar), had done exams on another instrument. Consequently, the data indicate that most students take exams, and where they do not, there are likely to be extenuating circumstances i.e. they play guitar (at this school the guitar classes are popular rather than classical), they are too young, or it is their second instrument.

4.1 Students' attitudes

The results indicate that students consider exams to be an important factor in learning music. 77% of students agree that exams improve playing. 83% agree that getting a grade gives them personal satisfaction. 49% believe that they would work equally hard if they did not do exams. 40% disagree with this statement. The students' attitude to learning exam repertoire is quite positive, with almost 57% agreeing that enjoy learning exam pieces. 25% indicated that they did not enjoy learning exam pieces, with 18% having no opinion. 71% of the students agreed they would like to pick their

own pieces. Almost 85% of the students agreed that exams help learn scales, theory and ear tests, supporting Hallam's findings that exams impact on practice routines, with students spending more time on these elements coming up to exams [15].

Students' attitudes to different performance settings were ascertained using a Likert (rating) scale. The purpose of the enjoyment questions was to ascertain which performance situations the students preferred, and how they compared with the exam setting. Playing for oneself had the highest enjoyment factor, with 92% saying they enjoy this activity (51% indicating they really enjoy it). Playing with others ranked next at 68%. 21% of the respondents did not play with others; therefore, for those who do, 86% enjoyed it. Playing for Christmas concerts rated highly with 58% indicating that they enjoy this activity. 51% enjoyed playing for family, with a relatively large percentage (38%) indicating that they partly enjoy it. 46% enjoyed playing for friends, with 21% stating that they never do so.

Playing in competitions ranked similarly; 20% did not play for competitions, so of those who did, 62% enjoyed the activity. This would indicate quite a strong positive response to competitions amongst the respondents. 35% of students stated that they did not play at school, indicating some disconnect between school music and extra-curricular music. 39% indicated that they enjoy playing at school. Finally, exams come at the bottom of the list, with only 22% stating that they enjoy performing for exams. 41% state that they partly enjoy it, while 28% state that they don't enjoy performing for exams.

It is evident that the enjoyment factors of 'playing for myself' and 'playing with others' rank well ahead, with playing for Christmas concerts, competitions, family, friends and at school ranking in that order. Finally, playing for exams falls well behind in terms of enjoyment.

A comparison of the attitudes amongst the age groups indicated some difference: for the 16+ group, playing with others (79%) came second only to playing for oneself (87%), with playing for friends (46%) coming third; while with the younger group, playing for oneself (88%), playing for Christmas concerts (84%), and playing for competitions (76%) were the most enjoyable. Performing for exams ranked the lowest for both groups.

4.2 Analysis of the Repertoire

For the whole group, 425 pieces were indicated, providing a considerable sample of repertoire. This enabled an analysis to be done on several grounds. The first was by genre, which were classified as follows: classical, jazz,

popular, film/show, and traditional. Some simple (beginners') children's pieces did not fit into any of these so a separate category was identified for these; and a 'seasonal' category was identified (Christmas etc).

The repertoire played by the students was analysed for exam and non-exam repertoire. It was found that 225 (54%) of the pieces were exam pieces, and 199 (46%) non-exam pieces. Students who take exams played 70% exam repertoire and 30% non-exam repertoire, so their performance programmes are heavily dictated by the exam syllabi. Of the 225 exam pieces indicated, 167 (74%) were classical, 17 (7%) were children's and 41 (18%) were jazz. The jazz and children's pieces were in the lower grades and were not represented after grade 5. None of the other genres or categories (popular, film-show, traditional or seasonal) was represented in the exam repertoire at any level.

Fig. 1: Exam and non-exam repertoire by genre

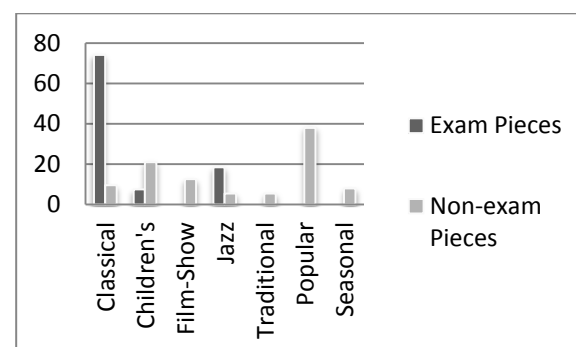


Figure 1 indicates a significant difference between exam repertoire and the type of music that students play outside of exams. Few students are electing to play classical music outside of the exams. Another significant factor is the under-representation of traditional music, especially in a country with a very strong tradition. It is not represented at all in the exam repertoire and only marginally (5.5%) in the non-exam repertoire.

5. Discussion

The data indicate that the repertoire played is very much influenced by exams. Of the overall repertoire played, 44% was classical, 36% contemporary genres (popular, jazz and film/show), 16% miscellaneous (seasonal and children's) and 3% traditional. However, students who did exams played 70% classical and non-exam students played no classical music as all, although some exam students played classical pieces other than exam repertoire. Another key finding was that the

exam repertoire had no popular music, film/show music or traditional music. The only contemporary genre included was jazz which accounted for 18% of the total exam repertoire, but not at all represented over grade 5. A large majority of respondents played pieces other than exam pieces, with all but two students indicating playing four or more pieces. Consequently the concern that students are only learning exam pieces does not hold here.

There is evidence of considerable homogeneity in terms of the repertoire of exam students. Several students at particular grades played exactly the same repertoire. It would appear therefore that there is little room for teachers' professional discretion in selecting repertoire for students' interests and needs. While this is a study of one school, the implications of this are important in terms of what children of a particular age group will play annually. It would seem that thousands of students will play the same pieces in any given year! As they progress, they will play the same repertoire as their peers and one can only imagine all of these students arriving together at university with an almost identical repertoire!

There was hardly any link between the music students liked to listen to and the music they play. Jensen states that curriculum should be appropriate and give meaningful choices [20]. The current graded exam system appears to offer little repertoire choice. The same argument for the inclusion of classical music in the syllabus could be used for traditional and world musics, as these seem to be neglected or ignored. If traditional music was included in the syllabus, it would lead to greater participation and appreciation for that genre.

Questions need to be asked therefore about the culture being promulgated by the graded exam system and why a hierarchy of genres seems to exist. Green states that prevailing ideologies during the 20th century favoured classical music [6]. She states that 'through the twentieth century and stretching before and beyond, people have argued, or have assumed, that Western classical music, very broadly defined, is the only really valuable style of music' [6]. She states that the majority of children from middle and working classes favour popular music, and that 'the ideology of classical music's superior value corresponds with the values of a minority of middle-class children, whereas it deviates from the musical tastes of some middle-class and many working-class children' [6]. Consequently 'ideologies about music serve to perpetuate existing social relations' [6].

Downey also highlights that fact the Irish traditional music and musicians were 'afforded

low status' and shunned by the educational establishment for many decades during the last century [10]. She outlines the key individuals and events that have changed this status, with traditional music now a core element of secondary school and third level music programmes. Yet the evidence from this study would indicate that this option has not yet filtered through to the graded instrumental music exams.

While the writer is aware that graded exams exist for Irish traditional music, it would be desirable to have an integrated approach to learning music rather than students having to make a choice early on to participate and focus on one genre over another.

The critical drop-out age identified by Driscoll coincides with students becoming more independent in their taste in music and with popular culture becoming increasingly part of their lives [3]. Returning to Jensen's view that curriculum should be appropriate and give meaningful choice to motivate learning, it is important that account is taken of students' interests and cultures.

6. Conclusion

To return to the research questions, there is little doubt that the graded exam system plays a significant role in teaching and learning for the students in this study. Students perceive the examinations as having a significant role in their musical development, and get personal satisfaction from doing the grades. However, younger students were more positive in terms of their enjoyment of playing for exams, and a significant percentage said that they would learn anyway (without exams) indicating strong intrinsic motivation. Students indicated reasonable satisfaction with the exam repertoire, but in general preferred non-exam material, which was mainly popular, and closely linked to their expressed listening preferences.

The findings indicate a dominance of one particular culture in the exam system, with the exclusion of others. The system impacts largely on the repertoire played by the students. The only contemporary genre represented in the exam repertoire is jazz. Traditional music is not represented at all in the exam repertoire and largely under-represented in the repertoire that students play. Students who do exams are more likely to elect to play classical music outside of exams, so this would support the argument for the inclusion of under-represented genres (such as Irish traditional music) in the exam repertoire.

Although students expressed that playing with others is highly enjoyable – especially the

older students, this is not catered for by the graded music system. Younger students expressed that they enjoyed playing for Christmas concerts and competitions, more than exams. This indicates that other modes of performance – students could be assessed in a group setting with an audience or peers rather than alone in a room with a tutor – could be beneficial for students.

The highly homogenised exam system for all instruments and genres needs to be examined and critiqued. Because students and teachers consider the exams to be so important, it is imperative that the assessment drives good pedagogical practices resulting in appropriate learning outcomes. Consequently, I would argue that it is important to consider what the desired learning outcomes for instrumental music education are and to develop appropriate assessment strategies to encourage these outcomes. These could include increased choice and flexibility in repertoire choice; incorporating ensemble playing; developing suitable assessment strategies for improvisation, creativity and playing by ear; including process based as well as product based assessment.

There have been some positive initiatives by exam boards to accommodate group tuition, although some of these are not yet mainstream. New directions in the Leaving Cert music programme have seen participation rise over the past decade. They have resulted in a dramatic increase in students presenting popular and traditional music for assessment. During that period, other avenues to third level have opened, and students can progress to study programmes in popular music, traditional music and other related programmes in arts administration etc. The uni-dimensional progression towards the paradigm of the virtuoso classical musician is no longer the only vision for students.

The work of Green [6] in the area of ‘informal learning’ in music, draws on an understanding of the learning practices of jazz, traditional and popular musicians, and proposes a new culture of music learning. She recognises that music education in general has much to learn from these traditions, where learning is largely social in nature through immersion in culture, practice and tradition; and is by aural imitation, improvisation and experimentation.

Teachers are often not aware of the cultural rituals and the impact of institutionalised practices on their teaching. Both the work of Black et al., and Green have shown how teacher awareness can lead to reflective and reflexive practice, transforming and improving teaching and learning [4-6]. The time would seem right for such change in music education with assessment strategies giving

teachers more professional discretion, and students’ more choice, leading to greater and sustained participation in instrumental music education for learners.

It is recognized the findings of this study may be largely impacted by the practices at local level at the school where the study took place, therefore generalisability on a large scale is not claimed. It is hoped that further study and debate in this area will follow to shed further light on what Rostvall has termed the “black box” of instrumental music teaching and learning [18].

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APPENDIX 15: Student Data from the IFS

An analysis of statements from the student questionnaire from the IFS.

Pianists and non-pianists compared across Q10 and Q11. Of the 15 statements in Q10 & Q11 6 differ significantly across the pianists and non-pianists. I will firstly report these opinions. The five item likert scales were cross tabulated with whether the student played the piano or not.

Q10 Statement 1 – Exams help me improve my playing

	Piano N=45	Otherwise N=21
Totally Disagree	1	1
N=2	2.2%	4.8%
Disagree	1	2
N=3	2.2%	9.5%
No Opinion	2	8
N=10	4.4%	38.1%
Agree	23	6
N=29	51.1%	28.6%
Strongly Agree	18	4
N=22	40%	19%

Fishers Exact p-value = 0.003.

There is a significant difference between the piano and non-piano players. Examining the cross tabulation indicates that a larger proportion of the piano players either agree or strongly agree that exams help improve their playing.

Q10 Statement 2 – Getting a grade gives me personal satisfaction

	Piano N=45	Otherwise N=20
Totally Disagree	0	2
N=2	0%	10%
Disagree	2	3
N=5	4.4%	15%
No Opinion	1	3
N=4	2.2%	15%
Agree	22	9
N=31	48.9%	45%
Strongly Agree	20	3
N=23	44.4%	15%

Fishers Exact p-value = 0.001.

The major difference appears between those who strongly agree that getting a grade gives them personal satisfaction with a much larger percentage in the piano group.

Q10 Statement 4 – I enjoy learning exam pieces

	Piano N=45	Otherwise N=20
Totally Disagree	0	3
N=3	0%	15%
Disagree	7	6
N=13	15.6%	30%
No Opinion	9	3
N=12	20%	15%
Agree	23	6
N=29	51.1%	30%
Strongly Agree	6	2
N=8	13.3%	10%

Pearson's Chi-square p-value = 0.042

A larger percentage of piano players agree or strongly agree that they enjoy learning exam pieces.

Q11 Statement 1 – Do you enjoy playing for exams

	Piano N=44	Otherwise N=20
Never	2	4
N=6	4.5%	20%
Don't Enjoy	9	9
N=18	20.5%	45%
Partly Enjoy	22	4
N=26	50%	20%
Enjoy	9	1
N=10	20.5%	5%
Really Enjoy	2	2
N=4	4.5%	10%

Pearson's Chi-square p-value = 0.016

The main difference across the groups is in the don't enjoy and partly enjoy groups. More piano players partly enjoy and enjoy playing for exams where as a larger percentage from the non-piano group do not enjoy playing.

Q11 Statement 4 – Do you enjoy playing at school

	Piano N=45	Otherwise N=21
Never	21	2
N=23	46.7%	9.5%
Don't Enjoy	7	2
N=9	15.6%	9.5%
Partly Enjoy	2	6
N=8	4.4%	28.6%
Enjoy	13	7
N=20	28.9%	33.3%
Really Enjoy	2	4
N=6	4.4%	19%

Pearson's Chi-square p-value = 0.003.

The largest difference is in the never group. A larger percentage of piano players never get to play in school.

Q11 Statement 7 – I enjoy playing with others

	Piano N=45	Otherwise N=21
Never	13	1
N=14	28.9%	4.8%
Don't Enjoy	0	0
N=0	0%	0%
Partly Enjoy	7	1
N=8	15.6%	4.8%
Enjoy	10	6
N=16	22.2%	28.6%
Really Enjoy	15	13
N=28	33.3%	61.9%

Pearson's Chi-square P-value = 0.04

A larger percentage of those who don't play the piano enjoy or really enjoy playing with others. Also a larger percentage of piano players never play with others.

The remaining cross tabulations did not differ statistically

APPENDIX 16: Statistical Information on Parent Questionnaire Items

Comparison of attitudes of parents who did and did not have instrumental lessons

Q1 Music is as important as other subjects *Lessons

Crosstab					
			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q1AsImportantSubject	Disagree	Count	1	1	2
		% within Lessons	1.6%	3.7%	2.2%
	Neutral	Count	7	5	12
		% within Lessons	10.9%	18.5%	13.2%
	Agree	Count	33	9	42
		% within Lessons	51.6%	33.3%	46.2%
	Strongly Agree	Count	23	12	35
		% within Lessons	35.9%	44.4%	38.5%
Total	Count	64	27	91	
	% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.948 ^a	3	.400
Likelihood Ratio	2.942	3	.401
Linear-by-Linear Association	.038	1	.846
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

Q1 I want my children to participate socially in music *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q1Socially	Disagree	Count	2	0	2
		% within Lessons	3.0%	.0%	2.2%
	Neutral	Count	11	6	17
		% within Lessons	16.7%	22.2%	18.3%
	Agree	Count	29	10	39
		% within Lessons	43.9%	37.0%	41.9%
	Strongly Agree	Count	24	11	35
		% within Lessons	36.4%	40.7%	37.6%
Total	Count	66	27	93	
	% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.457 ^a	3	.692
Likelihood Ratio	2.002	3	.572
Linear-by-Linear Association	.073	1	.788
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .58.

Q1 Doing exams will be beneficial for them *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q1Exams	Strongly Disagree	Count	2	0	2
		% within Lessons	3.0%	.0%	2.2%
	Disagree	Count	3	2	5
		% within Lessons	4.5%	7.4%	5.4%
	Neutral	Count	18	10	28
		% within Lessons	27.3%	37.0%	30.1%
	Agree	Count	29	8	37
		% within Lessons	43.9%	29.6%	39.8%
	Strongly Agree	Count	14	7	21
		% within Lessons	21.2%	25.9%	22.6%
Total	Count	66	27	93	
	% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.892 ^a	4	.576
Likelihood Ratio	3.458	4	.484
Linear-by-Linear Association	.006	1	.938
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .58.

Q1 Learning music will help him/her develop academically *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q1develop	Strongly Disagree	Count	0	1	1
		% within Lessons	.0%	3.8%	1.1%
	Disagree	Count	2	1	3
		% within Lessons	3.0%	3.8%	3.3%
	Neutral	Count	13	1	14
		% within Lessons	19.7%	3.8%	15.2%
	Agree	Count	34	13	47
		% within Lessons	51.5%	50.0%	51.1%
	Strongly Agree	Count	17	10	27
		% within Lessons	25.8%	38.5%	29.3%
	Total	Count	66	26	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.690 ^a	4	.153
Likelihood Ratio	7.503	4	.112
Linear-by-Linear Association	.650	1	.420
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.

Q1 Music talent is in the family *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q1Family	Strongly Disagree	Count	3	3	6
		% within Lessons	4.5%	11.1%	6.5%
	Disagree	Count	11	3	14
		% within Lessons	16.7%	11.1%	15.1%
	Neutral	Count	19	9	28
		% within Lessons	28.8%	33.3%	30.1%
	Agree	Count	22	7	29
		% within Lessons	33.3%	25.9%	31.2%
	Strongly Agree	Count	11	5	16
		% within Lessons	16.7%	18.5%	17.2%
Total	Count	66	27	93	
	% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.180 ^a	4	.703
Likelihood Ratio	2.094	4	.719
Linear-by-Linear Association	.190	1	.663
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.74.

Q3 How do you rate the importance of the following skills for learning music?

Sight-reading *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Sight_Reading	Highly Important	Count	22	8	30
		% within Lessons	33.8%	28.6%	32.3%
	Important	Count	38	17	55
		% within Lessons	58.5%	60.7%	59.1%
	Dont know	Count	2	3	5
		% within Lessons	3.1%	10.7%	5.4%
	Not very important	Count	3	0	3
		% within Lessons	4.6%	.0%	3.2%
Total		Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.601 ^a	3	.308
Likelihood Ratio	4.244	3	.236
Linear-by-Linear Association	.057	1	.812
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .90.

Q3 Playing by ear * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Ear	Highly Important	Count	17	5	22
		% within Lessons	26.2%	17.9%	23.7%
	Important	Count	38	18	56
		% within Lessons	58.5%	64.3%	60.2%
	Dont know	Count	5	3	8
		% within Lessons	7.7%	10.7%	8.6%
	Not very important	Count	4	1	5
		% within Lessons	6.2%	3.6%	5.4%
	Not at all important	Count	1	1	2
		% within Lessons	1.5%	3.6%	2.2%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.506 ^a	4	.826
Likelihood Ratio	1.516	4	.824
Linear-by-Linear Association	.398	1	.528
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .60.

Q3 Playing with others * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Others	Highly Important	Count	20	12	32
		% within Lessons	30.8%	42.9%	34.4%
	Important	Count	29	9	38
		% within Lessons	44.6%	32.1%	40.9%
	Dont know	Count	8	2	10
		% within Lessons	12.3%	7.1%	10.8%
	Not very important	Count	8	4	12
		% within Lessons	12.3%	14.3%	12.9%
	Not at all important	Count	0	1	1
		% within Lessons	.0%	3.6%	1.1%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.442 ^a	4	.349
Likelihood Ratio	4.562	4	.335
Linear-by-Linear Association	.012	1	.912
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

Q3 Being able to perform in public * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Public	Highly Important	Count	14	8	22
		% within Lessons	21.5%	28.6%	23.7%
	Important	Count	32	15	47
		% within Lessons	49.2%	53.6%	50.5%
	Dont know	Count	2	2	4
		% within Lessons	3.1%	7.1%	4.3%
	Not very important	Count	16	2	18
		% within Lessons	24.6%	7.1%	19.4%
	Not at all important	Count	1	1	2
		% within Lessons	1.5%	3.6%	2.2%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.697 ^a	4	.320
Likelihood Ratio	5.208	4	.267
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.659	1	.198
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .60.

Q3 Creating/composing music or songs * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Compose	Highly Important	Count	1	5	6
		% within Lessons	1.5%	17.9%	6.5%
	Important	Count	24	9	33
		% within Lessons	36.9%	32.1%	35.5%
	Dont know	Count	19	6	25
		% within Lessons	29.2%	21.4%	26.9%
	Not very important	Count	19	7	26
		% within Lessons	29.2%	25.0%	28.0%
	Not at all important	Count	2	1	3
		% within Lessons	3.1%	3.6%	3.2%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.787 ^a	4	.067
Likelihood Ratio	8.047	4	.090
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.869	1	.172
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .90.

Q3 Improvisation * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Impro	Highly Important	Count	6	6	12
		% within Lessons	9.2%	22.2%	13.0%
	Important	Count	30	11	41
		% within Lessons	46.2%	40.7%	44.6%
	Dont know	Count	19	6	25
		% within Lessons	29.2%	22.2%	27.2%
	Not very important	Count	10	4	14
		% within Lessons	15.4%	14.8%	15.2%
	Total	Count	65	27	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.943 ^a	3	.401
Likelihood Ratio	2.735	3	.434
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.038	1	.308
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.52.

Q3 Figuring out tunes/pieces for him/herself *Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3FiguringOut	Highly Important	Count	13	7	20
		% within Lessons	20.0%	25.0%	21.5%
	Important	Count	40	19	59
		% within Lessons	61.5%	67.9%	63.4%
	Dont know	Count	7	2	9
		% within Lessons	10.8%	7.1%	9.7%
	Not very important	Count	5	0	5
		% within Lessons	7.7%	.0%	5.4%
	Total		65	28	93
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.770 ^a	3	.428
Likelihood Ratio	4.207	3	.240
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.119	1	.145
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.51.

Q3 Performing repertoire * Lessons

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q3Repertoire	Highly Important	Count	7	3	10
		% within Lessons	10.8%	10.7%	10.8%
	Important	Count	29	13	42
		% within Lessons	44.6%	46.4%	45.2%
	Dont know	Count	15	8	23
		% within Lessons	23.1%	28.6%	24.7%
	Not very important	Count	13	3	16
		% within Lessons	20.0%	10.7%	17.2%
	Not at all important	Count	1	1	2
		% within Lessons	1.5%	3.6%	2.2%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.610 ^a	4	.807
Likelihood Ratio	1.665	4	.797
Linear-by-Linear Association	.099	1	.753
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .60.

Q5 Indicate your opinion on music exams in the following statements

Q5 Graded exams provide an essential independent appraisal of my child's progress * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5ProgressExams	1.00	Count	3	0	3
		% within Lessons	4.6%	.0%	3.3%
	2.00	Count	4	2	6
		% within Lessons	6.2%	7.7%	6.6%
	3.00	Count	3	4	7
		% within Lessons	4.6%	15.4%	7.7%
	4.00	Count	46	16	62
		% within Lessons	70.8%	61.5%	68.1%
	5.00	Count	9	4	13
		% within Lessons	13.8%	15.4%	14.3%
Total		Count	65	26	91
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.330 ^a	4	.363
Likelihood Ratio	4.831	4	.305
Linear-by-Linear Association	.006	1	.939
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .86.

Q5 Exams provide motivation for practice * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Motivation	1.00	Count	1	0	1
		% within Lessons	1.5%	.0%	1.1%
	2.00	Count	7	1	8
		% within Lessons	10.8%	3.6%	8.6%
	3.00	Count	2	0	2
		% within Lessons	3.1%	.0%	2.2%
	4.00	Count	33	19	52
		% within Lessons	50.8%	67.9%	55.9%
	5.00	Count	22	8	30
		% within Lessons	33.8%	28.6%	32.3%
Total		Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.662 ^a	4	.454
Likelihood Ratio	4.695	4	.320
Linear-by-Linear Association	.706	1	.401
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

Q5 My child enjoys music exams * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Enjoy	1.00	Count	7	2	9
		% within Lessons	10.8%	7.4%	9.8%
	2.00	Count	18	4	22
		% within Lessons	27.7%	14.8%	23.9%
	3.00	Count	18	10	28
		% within Lessons	27.7%	37.0%	30.4%
	4.00	Count	20	11	31
		% within Lessons	30.8%	40.7%	33.7%
	5.00	Count	2	0	2
		% within Lessons	3.1%	.0%	2.2%
Total		Count	65	27	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.484 ^a	4	.480
Likelihood Ratio	4.144	4	.387
Linear-by-Linear Association	.984	1	.321
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 3 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

Q5 The exams place too much pressure on my child * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Pressure	1.00	Count	4	1	5
		% within Lessons	6.3%	3.6%	5.4%
	2.00	Count	37	13	50
		% within Lessons	57.8%	46.4%	54.3%
	3.00	Count	10	6	16
		% within Lessons	15.6%	21.4%	17.4%
	4.00	Count	11	7	18
		% within Lessons	17.2%	25.0%	19.6%
	5.00	Count	2	1	3
		% within Lessons	3.1%	3.6%	3.3%
Total		Count	64	28	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.718 ^a	4	.787
Likelihood Ratio	1.713	4	.788
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.336	1	.248
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .91.

Q5 My child enjoys the repertoire s/he plays for exams * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Repertoire	1.00	Count	4	0	4
		% within Lessons	6.2%	.0%	4.4%
	2.00	Count	6	4	10
		% within Lessons	9.2%	15.4%	11.0%
	3.00	Count	19	8	27
		% within Lessons	29.2%	30.8%	29.7%
	4.00	Count	30	12	42
		% within Lessons	46.2%	46.2%	46.2%
	5.00	Count	6	2	8
		% within Lessons	9.2%	7.7%	8.8%
Total		Count	65	26	91
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.305 ^a	4	.680
Likelihood Ratio	3.357	4	.500
Linear-by-Linear Association	.019	1	.890
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

Q5 the exams repertoire is limited * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Limited	1.00	Count	2	0	2
		% within Lessons	3.1%	.0%	2.2%
	2.00	Count	6	4	10
		% within Lessons	9.2%	14.8%	10.9%
	3.00	Count	28	14	42
		% within Lessons	43.1%	51.9%	45.7%
	4.00	Count	26	6	32
		% within Lessons	40.0%	22.2%	34.8%
	5.00	Count	3	3	6
		% within Lessons	4.6%	11.1%	6.5%
Total		Count	65	27	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.667 ^a	4	.323
Likelihood Ratio	5.233	4	.264
Linear-by-Linear Association	.048	1	.826
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

Q5 Exams are important for learning scales, sight-reading, ear tests etc.

*** Lessons**

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Scales	2.00	Count	11	2	13
		% within Lessons	16.9%	7.1%	14.0%
	3.00	Count	10	4	14
		% within Lessons	15.4%	14.3%	15.1%
	4.00	Count	33	18	51
		% within Lessons	50.8%	64.3%	54.8%
	5.00	Count	11	4	15
		% within Lessons	16.9%	14.3%	16.1%
	Total	Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.091 ^a	3	.554
Likelihood Ratio	2.255	3	.521
Linear-by-Linear Association	.787	1	.375
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.91.

Q5 Passing exams gives my child as sense of achievement * Lessons

(1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree)

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Achievement	1.00	Count	1	0	1
		% within Lessons	1.6%	.0%	1.1%
	2.00	Count	1	0	1
		% within Lessons	1.6%	.0%	1.1%
	3.00	Count	5	2	7
		% within Lessons	7.8%	7.1%	7.6%
	4.00	Count	35	16	51
		% within Lessons	54.7%	57.1%	55.4%
	5.00	Count	22	10	32
		% within Lessons	34.4%	35.7%	34.8%
Total		Count	64	28	92
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.918 ^a	4	.922
Likelihood Ratio	1.494	4	.828
Linear-by-Linear Association	.359	1	.549
N of Valid Cases	92		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

**Q5 Annual exams are important to mark my child's progress *
Lessons**

Crosstab

			Lessons		Total
			Yes	No	
Q5Important	1.00	Count	1	0	1
		% within Lessons	1.5%	.0%	1.1%
	2.00	Count	5	2	7
		% within Lessons	7.7%	7.1%	7.5%
	3.00	Count	11	3	14
		% within Lessons	16.9%	10.7%	15.1%
	4.00	Count	39	18	57
		% within Lessons	60.0%	64.3%	61.3%
	5.00	Count	9	5	14
		% within Lessons	13.8%	17.9%	15.1%
Total		Count	65	28	93
		% within Lessons	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.208 ^a	4	.877
Likelihood Ratio	1.520	4	.823
Linear-by-Linear Association	.739	1	.390
N of Valid Cases	93		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

APPENDIX 17: Stimulus Material for the Student Focus Group

Focus Group with Students

First name	Da [REDACTED]
Age	16
Instrument(s)	Tin ⁽²⁾ whistle, ⁽²⁾ recorder, ⁽⁴⁾ violin
How long have/did you play for?	
What grade, is any, did you do?	2/3 (violin)
What did you like most about learning to play an instrument?	Being able to play songs I liked. and up learning (how)
What did you like least about learning to playing an instrument?	Didn't enjoy playing it and didn't feel it would benefit me in the future.
What kind of music do you like to listen to?	Pop and Rock.

APPENDIX 18: Parental Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet about the research.

Title of Study: 'Key signatures and signature pedagogies – participant voices from the instrumental music lesson.'



King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: SSHL/10/11-32

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify your child from any publications.

Please tick
or initial

I understand that if I or my child decide at any time during the research that we no longer wish to participate in this project, we can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that we will be able to withdraw the data up to September 30th 2012.



- I consent to the processing of my child's personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.



- I consent to the focus group sessions being audio-recorded for the purpose of the recording and transcribing the views of the students for the purpose of the research.



Parent's Statement:

I  _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to my child taking part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

10/06/2012

APPENDIX 19: Wordle Representation of Teacher Orla's Interview

pieces

fail enjoy work difficult syllabus aural general exams hard

kind repertoire marks kids Grade play children

scales examining problem system students ear preparation class practise

pressure right School poor nerves examine music examiner

teachers piano sight-reading taught

sound technique Music teaching exam playing

teacher homes perform interesting teach student

board head bad

APPENDIX 20: Wordle Representation of Parents' Choice of Genre

enjoys like classical
guitar guitar
mind
Open
Contemporary
enjoy
Traditional
familiar
pieces
pick learning opinion
particular pop play
enjoyable
Music styles
popular interested Whatever child
Jazz children
style Irish Classical traditional
range preference year Modern interest types
Popular wide enjoyment lessons variety jazz happy